



Psalm 37:1–11

click bit.ly/3GQ7Zc8 to hear this sermon as preached (or scan QR code→)

A Psalm of David

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>¹ Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.</p> <p>² For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.</p> <p>³ Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.</p> <p>⁴ Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.</p> <p>⁵ Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.</p> <p>⁶ He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.</p> | <p>⁷ Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.</p> <p>⁸ Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—it only causes harm.</p> <p>⁹ For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,
They shall inherit the earth.</p> <p>¹⁰ For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it shall be no more.</p> <p>¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.</p> |
|---|---|

v1–11, The disease of envying the wicked and the remedy of enjoying God
v12–26, The distinction between the conduct/end of the wicked and the conduct/end of the righteous
v27–40, The directions for coming out on the correct side of this distinction

Main idea: Those who prefer God's glory to their own (i.e. the meek) will be immeasurably happy.

Introduction: What do you think will make you happy?

1. The disease and its remedy (v1–2, 7–11)
 - a. The disease: fretful envy of the wicked
 - i. Fretting, anger, wrath; v1a, 8a
 - ii. Envy, v1b
 - iii. Do not fret their prospering, v7b
 - iv. Do not even fret their successes in wickedness, v7c
 - b. The remedy: consider their end, and the end of the godly
 - i. They will soon be cut down and wither; v2, 9a, 10
 - ii. Fretting causes harm, v8b
 - iii. They who wait upon Yahweh will inherit the earth; v7a, 9b–c, 11
 - c. There are only two possible ends: to have Yahweh, and therefore all things with Him; or, not to have Him, and therefore to have nothing else either.
2. How to apply the remedy, v3–6
 - a. Our hope: "trust in Yahweh," v3. And do good. Trust Him for what He will do, so that you are freed to do merely what you are commanded to do. Whatever good you have comes from His faithfulness, and you are guaranteed an infinite supply of that (His faithfulness). Whatever else you depend upon, aim to depend upon Him in it, first and foremost.
 - b. Our happiness: "delight in Yahweh," v4. The only delight that He is guaranteed to satisfy is delight in Him. Desire of the heart is the desire of the whole person intellect/emotion/will. Whatever else you enjoy, aim to enjoy Him in it, first and foremost.
 - c. Our help: "commit (entrust) your way to Yahweh," v5–6. This is trusting Him for the "do good" part of v3a. We must trust the Lord not only that He will do His part, but that He will supply all of the ability and efficacy of our part.

Conclusion: Would you escape the trap of fretting over the wicked? First, have the Lord—in the sense of having Christ (He is the One Who has actually lived that way). Second, make your whole life a continual exercise in having the Lord: trust, delight, entrust. If your hope, joy, and ability are the Lord Himself, then they can never be taken from you.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Well in our series is Psalms we come tonight to Psalm 37. So, let's ask God for his help.

Our Father in heaven, how we thank you for your great mercy to us and giving us your word. And for how well you know us and your word knows us being living and active and the hands of your spirit to discern even the thoughts and intentions of our hearts for truly, we are prone to fretting over and rash fury in response to the wicked.

And we don't realize what it shows about our hearts and what we are treasuring and what we are trusting when we fret and when we are controlled by rush anger. So we thank you for holding up to us the mirror of your word. We pray that your Holy Spirit would do that for us tonight and we pray that he would go with us and help us and exhort us and encourage and comfort and counsel and rebuke.

And all of those things that he does with your Word to us, to point us to Christ and to apply Christ to us that you would not. Let us be like those who looked in the mirror and then go away and forget. And so help us tonight and help us going from tonight.

We ask and Jesus name, Amen.

Psalm 37 is another one of the acrostic. Psalms the most famous I think is probably Psalm 119 but we ran into one earlier in Psalm 25. And as was Psalm 25, there are what we would call imperfections in the acrost not that the Psalm is imperfect, but that it is not exactly.

Two lines per letter. One letter is missing all together, some letters. Just have one line and one letter has three lines, but it's an acrostic Psalm which makes the theme of the Psalm as a whole, The controlling idea in each part in a way, that's different from other Psalms that are, that are more informed by the arc of the Psalm, or the shape of the poetry often probably the most common being a chiasm where you have the same thing at both ends.

And then the second and and penultimate, if you go in one step, you have similar ideas until you get to the middle. And the middle idea in a chiastic psalm is usually the main idea. This one has the main idea all the way through and one of the best ways or at least, the way that I have found.

Easiest for remembering the theme of Psalm 37 is that it's the same as the theme of Psalm 73. Psalm 73 is precious to us for that soaring pleasure in God. You have I in heaven, but you and there's nothing on earth that I desire beside you. And we remember that Psalm and what it took asap to get there, the he had envied the wicked and he had done so and been really, he says himself, like, a beast towards God wanting all of the stuff.

But carrying little for God himself and that if you had spoken in his in his despair, he would have betrayed a generation of God's children and so forth. Until he went to worship. When he went to worship, he saw his end having the Lord forever and ever. But he also saw the end of the wicked that they did not have the Lord now and they would not have the Lord then and that when their time and on earth was done, their fall would be calamitous.

Indeed and often the wicked don't even wait that long to just stumble and fall. What we have some, excuse me, similar theme. Then in Psalm 37, you can see right off the bat. Do not fret because of evildoers and what we'll find as we go through the psalm over the next three of these Wednesday evenings.

Lord willing. Is that the remedy for not fretting over evildoers, is the same to consider the Lord Himself to consider the Lord Himself as our delight and does our end that we will have him forever. And therefore we will have everything else together with him, but we won't need the everything else because he will be our delight and that the wicked whom we are so tempted to envy and over whom we are so tempted to fret will not have him and horrible.

Then in the true sense of the word a horror then will be there in. So roughly, we're looking at the Psalm and three sections and this is very rough because there's a lot of overlap in each of the sections. If any one of them were taken by itself, we might give it any one of the three titles and that would have been fine.

So, there's not actually that much distinction. We're just labeling the three sections here by what you find, most of in that one section. And again, that's because it's one of these across acrostic poems where with the theme is given in a kind of line upon line, sort of way perhaps think of the book of Proverbs.

Although Many have seen Proverbs as having much less structure than the book actually does. But it in several sections, It has that line upon line characteristic. So in verses 1 through 11, we see the disease of envying, the wicked and the remedy to that disease of enjoying God, that'll be the section.

We take tonight in verses 12 through 26. We see the distinction between the conduct and end of the wicked, and the conduct and end of the righteous, how the wicked behave themselves and how they end up versus, how

the righteous behave themselves, and how they end up. And then two times from now Lord, willing versus 27 through 40, We see the directions for coming out on the correct side of this distinction.

So tonight we'll be seeing the disease of envying, the wicked, and the remedy of enjoying God. And so let us hear read then versus one through 11.

Psalm 37 versus 1 through 11. These are God's words. A Psalm of David, you do not fret because of evildoers, Nor benvicious of the workers of iniquity for. They shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb trust in Yahwe and do good. Dwell in the land and feed on his faithfulness.

Delight yourself also in Yahweh and he shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to Yahweh. Trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light and your justice as the noon day. Rest and Yahweh and wait.

Patiently for him, Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass cease from anger, and forsake wrath, do not fret. It only causes harm for evildoers, shall be cut off, but those who wait on Yahweh. They shall inherit the earth for yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more Indeed.

You will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth and shalt delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Thus, far the reading of God's inspired and inerrant word.

We are in a season in which it seems like the wicked are prospering. Not only that, they are able to get much of what they want in this world by their wickedness. But that even the wickedness of their schemes when they devise things that are sinful out of a love for sin and they seem to succeed over and over again.

And what is the believer to do? When the wicked seemed to be winning over and over again? Well, he needs to trust in someone more powerful than the former president. He definitely was cheated and maybe robbed but cheated at least in the election. And he thought that just being on the right side of that meant that he must come out victorious at last as far as the election was concerned.

That was not a faith. That was, well founded. He was not able to come out victorious. Although many people held on to all kinds of interesting. Hope for a very long time, The believer. However, when the wicked are prospering, has something to hold on to that will always come true in the end.

And that is that he has the Lord that if he has the Lord now. And if the Lord is his delight, and if the Lord is his hope, and if the Lord is his help, Then who can take away his delight, and who can take away his hope, and who can take away his help.

And so these three things together, our hope and our delight and our help. Think of them. We'll re-think of them together tonight, as the thing, which makes us happy that which is our hope, that which is our delight, and that, which is our help. And one of the alarming things that the sound points out is that if we fret over the prosperity of the wicked, If they are if they are able to take from us our peace and we become furious inside or there's chaos or upheaval inside our spirits over.

What is going on or even? We begin to express that fury, verbally, or, or otherwise. What it's exposing is that the Lord is not, at least to us, at least, in the way that we are acting experientially. He's not our help and he's not our delight. And he's he's not our hope and he's not our delight and he's not our help.

So it's a very useful thing for a believer when the wicked prospers, whether this be on the macroscale with events in the culture, and in the country and in the world or whether it be in business, and the guy who is ruthless and cheats and steals, gets ahead in business, or whether it be an athletics or in whatever circles you move in, when the wicked prosper, there's an opportunity for you to ask the question and answer from whether or not you're fretting, is the Lord, really?

What makes me happy important question to answer. Because if something else makes you happy, if something else is necessary to make you happy, then that thing is taking up a space that belongs to God and that is idolatry. Thankfully however, Those who prefer God's glory to their own. And the reason I chose that phrase is because it uses the phrase, the word meek several times, and that's what a meek person is in this context.

Well in all contexts, they make person as someone who would rather see someone else advanced than himself. It's very closely related to humility. Think especially of Philippians chapter 2, where he talks about having the same mind that is in Christ. Jesus. And that's an extended description of meekness there.

But when we are meek before God, That meekness is, especially to prefer God's glory to our own. So as we look at this section in verses 1 through 11, Again, the organization of the Psalm does not fall out. Exactly. The way that we're taking it tonight because it is an acrostic and each two verse couplet or so, some are one, some are three.

When you get further on into the psalm, the fact I think we have a three tonight but each couplet each little section kind of has its end theme. But if you look at verses 1 and 2 and verses 7 through 11, we see

the disease fretful envy of the wicked and its remedy to consider the wicked's end over against the end of the godly.

So he says do not fret because of evildoers in verse one, A nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. In verse 1b, we see the same thing that you see in the first part of verse 1 and verse first part of verse 8, cease from anger and forsake wrath, do not fret.

Do not. Let yourself get old worked up about what the wicked seemed to be able to obtain for themselves or the success that they seem to have in their schemes. If you're going to be angry at the wickedness, then be angry at the wickedness because it is offensive to God and the sinfulness of it.

But you out of self-control determined to be angry at that, which is opposed to God. One of the ways you could tell that you're having rash anger or unrighteous anger is if you begin to fret and if you begin to fume and the anger is in control instead of you and control of the anger.

So do not fret cease, anger for say graph verse 1. A verse verse 8A. And then verse 1, B, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity in the, the same idea. I think appears in verse 7b fretting over their prospering Wishing that you could have the stuff that they have.

Do you really want to have what the wicked have? Because everything they have comes attached to and have not God. Why would you trade anything that you have? If you're a believer, which comes attached to and has God, why would you trade that for what the wicked have? When it's attached to and does not have God Don't even fret when they seem to succeed.

Or when they do succeed, in wickedness verse 7, rest and Yahweight patiently for him. Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Don't even fret when they succeed, It's always temporary. The devil seemed to have a resounding success in the garden and yet by tempting, the man, and the woman into sin.

He brought about that and he was instrumental in God's bringing about that in which the Lord determined most to glorify himself in this world to enter it as the Redeemer to enter it as the seed of the woman. The devil seemed to have great success in murdering the Lord, Jesus Christ at the cross and yet in.

So doing he became instrumental in the greatest work that the Lord had ever done for us in redeeming us by the blood of the Lord. Jesus who was a substitute for us on the cross So don't even fret their successes in Wickedness. So that's the disease. This fretting over the wicked.

What is the remedy? Well, the remedy is to consider their end. You see that in verse 2 for they shall soon be cut down. Like the grass and wither is the green herb very similar to ASAP. Who spends the first significant portion of Psalm 73 fretting, over the wicked and envious of the wicked.

And then he says, until I went to worship until I went and saw the glory of God. He saw their end In worship. We see our end. However, much the Holy Spirit helps you as you worship, God and your private worshiper and your family worshipping your in the public worship.

However, much the Holy Spirit helps you see how good God is, how great God is all of His glories? And not only that, he is that in and of himself, But that he has gathered you to himself. So that you would be His worshiper. That the the end or the point of the cross was not just the putting away of your sin.

Just like the, the purpose of the sacrifices was not just the, the bleeding and the burning, but that by the blood applied, and by the, the burning received the worshiper himself would be received and brought to God. God has done that for you. He has given himself to you.

This is what we see in worship, and so, truly the believer. When he comes to worship God, he ought to see his end that he has the living God and that that is why the Lord has redeemed us. No wonder Asap says until I went to worship and I saw their end.

Truly you set them in in slippery places. No wonder David here in verse 2 says, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and with her as the green herb. So the remedy to fretting over the wicked is considering their end and causing your end.

Also not just the long-term end, but the short-term end, When has the wrath of man ever brought about the righteousness of God. No, the Lord gives everything that is good and everything that is perfect. And what comes out of man, is his own responsibility is from him and if we have fleshly fretting it never accomplishes, anything good.

Verse 8 do not fret, it only causes harm and the word harm. There is a word that means that which is bad. It is used sometimes of wickedness and sometimes just of harm as it as it appears here in our translation. But we should remember in the poetry that words are used often this way because they do have that double meaning.

And so he's saying, if you fret over the wicked, you're becoming like the wicked. Don't do that. Don't act as if having God isn't enough for you were, then you will put yourself more in the shoes of the wicked man

than in the shoes of the righteous. So the remedy to fretting over the wicked is to consider their end and to consider our end verse 7A Rest in Yahweh.

Wait, patiently for him verse 9, those who wait on Yahweh. They shall inherit the earth. Verse 10, sorry. Verse 11, the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. So you have this weight? Wait, Wait until what we'll wait for him. And that doesn't mean you're necessarily waiting until the end but you're looking to him himself to, to be your delight, to be, to be your hope to be your delight and to be your help.

That's especially what we see in verses 3 through 6. Applying this remedy have the Lord as your hope. That's verse A trusts sorry. That's verse 3. Trust in Yahweh, have the Lord as your delight or you're happiness verse 4 and have the Lord as your help versus five and six first then have the Lord as your hope.

Trust in Yahweh and do good. Trust the Lord to do His part and you just do whatever. He's commanded you to do, you don't have to fret, you just have to have no other gods before him. You don't have to fret you, just come to him in the way that he has provided for you to worship him.

You don't have to fret, you treat his name, as weighty, You don't have to fret, you treat him as your great delight and therefore the day that he has set apart for you to have him in a way that you don't on the other six, You call it a delight and your delight in him, you don't have to fret, you only have to honor your father and your mother.

You don't have to fret. You have to treasure or value the image of God and others and not murder and and so forth. So, verse 3 says trust in Yahweh and do good, dwell in the land and feed on his faithfulness. Well, you can imagine two professing believers who are hungry, and one is happy.

And the other one is miserable and one of them says, how can you be so happy? We don't have a thing to eat. He says, well I'm enjoying the faithfulness of God. Didn't Jesus. Once wasn't he once challenged by someone, you know, God must not really be a good father to you or treat you like a treasured son, a beloved son, because he's let you go hungry for 40 days.

If you are the Son of God. Sure doesn't look like it now. But if you are tell the stones to become bread, but Jesus was feeding on something else, is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, He was enjoying his father's word.

His father's communication of himself as Father's faithfulness. The word translated faithfulness here is actually a word that often means truth. We too must enjoy God's faithfulness. Now, it doesn't mean you have to be starving to enjoy God's faithfulness. There's actually a connection to the land here. Dwell in the land, and feed on his faithfulness.

Because for Israel, part of their relationship with God was covenant promises that were closely connected to whether or not he would make the land produce. And so for them, when they sat down and they ate bread, they ate barley bread after the barley harvest and wheat bread after the wheat harvest, They would enjoy that God had been faithful to them again.

This is one of the reasons I hope when you pray before a meal, that's one of the reasons you're praying and so that you will remember to enjoy at that table, not just the pea salad that mom used to make so much in Iowa and you almost never get it anymore.

Yay is salad. Again you're enjoying your mother's affection and skill, but you should enjoy God's faithfulness to you. He's fed you again, he designed the food to be good. He designed your taste buds to enjoy. Its goodness. He designed eating itself to communicate something about how Jesus nourishes and strengthens and energizes and gladdens us whatever.

Good thing you enjoy. You need to learn to enjoy God Himself and his goodness to you in it. So that if the thing in God's providence has taken away, You don't go hungry because even when you were enjoying the thing, the primary thing, the primary object of your enjoyment.

Was God Himself and his goodness. And when the thing is gone, God is not gone. And when in his wisdom there is good reason for you, not to have the thing. His goodness is not gone and you can feed upon his faithfulness. So first of all, have the Lord as your hope Trust him to do His part.

If the Lord is, if the Lord is your hope, if your hope that he's going to do what he does, then you don't have to take vengeance, you don't have to get all furious inside and and have rash anger. The Lord is your hope and that can't be taken away.

If the Lord is your delight, that can't be taken away. Delight yourself also in Yahweh and he shall give you the desires of your heart. Oh, how irrational and blind? Our flesh can be.

When I was younger younger in years, too. But younger and immature. And my walk with the Lord, I read verses like these. And I thought that if I made the Lord Jesus number one, he would give me numbers 2 through 10. And so numbers two through 10. We're really numbers one through nine on my list of stuff that I enjoy and that I want it.

But I thought if I could somehow manipulate my heart and to feeling a certain way about Jesus, if I delighted myself in the Lord, Then I would get the other desires of my heart. Isn't that foolish? Look at you guys. You think I can't believe Pastor was so sinful and so silly.

You know what it is. Of course. Don't you, it's if the Lord is one through 10, then you get your whole top 10. If he is your delight then he is your desire and it does in the second half of the verse. When you start to learn how to do a little bit of exegesis, the second half of the verse actually explains what it means to delight yourself in the Lord.

It means to desire him with your heart. And for the, for the Hebrew, the heart was the center of the intellect, the center of the emotions and the center of the volition, or the will or your choices. So you think about everything with God and His glory at the center of that, and shaping all that, the foundation of that, all of your emotions are trained upon him to desire His glory and to enjoy him, your heart, your, the emotional aspect of your heart finds its chief end and enjoying him and glorifying him.

All of your decisions are aimed at serving him. Honoring him bringing him. Glory submitting to his wealth. That's what it means to delight in the Lord. And if you if you delight in the Lord, he will give you the desires of your heart. So if he's your happiness, no one could take it away, they can imprison you.

They can put you in isolation. They can torture you. They can try to tell you all the sorts of horrible things that they're going to do to your loved ones. But your loved ones belong to God too and how much better when those loved ones are believers and how much hope you can have for them.

If the Lord is the one to whom you are crying out for them, there's nothing anyone can do to you. That can take away your ultimate, happiness of the Lord, is your happiness. And so the Lord is our hope Trust him to do his part and then you do good.

The Lord is our happiness, delight and Yahweh and he will give you the desires of of your heart, but he's also our help versus five and six are basically the do good part of verse 3A. It's not God does his part trust in Yahweh and then you do your part and do good.

I mean it is but then you get to verse five and six and you find out well how does doing good happen? It comes by rolling yourself onto the Lord verse 5. It says commit your way to the Lord, Commit your way to Yahweh. The the verb is goal.

It's the root from which we get the place, Gilgal and many of you know why the place Gilgal is called Gilgal because it was there that they had the circumcision at the end of their wilderness, wandering and Yahweh rolled away the reproach of the Israelites and the word sounds.

The verb. Especially sounds like rolling. Golol. Golol Golol. Golol, So is the picture here. The commit your way to Yahweh is. It's true. Commit your way to the Lord and trust what you're doing to the Lord, but the word picture is roll your way until Yahweh or roll yourself onto Yahweh in your way that yeah, pretend for a moment.

Like one or more of you might be rather. Dramatic child and was very very thirsty and you came stumbling into the room and you're like So thirsty. I need water and then you roll under the couch and you just wait for somebody to bring you some water.

Commit your way to Yahweh, rest the whole of your being on the Lord rest all that you do on him, okay. So you have trust in your way and do good, but beginning of verse 3, and then you have roll yourself onto Yahweh. Basically commit your way to Yahweh, trust also in in him and he shall bring it to pass verse 6.

He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light and your justice as noonday. You know, one of the things that gets in our way in the way of wanting, to glorify God with what we do as wanting others to see how good we are with. What we do? You do something good and nobody saw it and it's like if you take steps without your watch on, they don't actually make you healthier.

They only count if they show up on the watch. But God says, when you entrust yourself to Him, even for your part even for the doing good part, he's gonna bring it out and this is actually literally going to come. True Jesus says, the righteous are going to shine like the sun In the kingdom of the Father that we will radiate with his own glory.

And so again, there's this waiting here, don't do things in order to be seen by others or so that they might think that that you are good. Trust in the Lord for your doing. Good. And he'll bring it out. And the second way that verse the, the second way that he will bring forth your righteousness as a light and you're justice.

As the noonday means is the Lord Himself is going to declare you righteous. You entrust yourself to him and you don't have to worry that others. Slander you that you get blamed for things that you didn't do or even framed for things that others have done. Because the Lord is going to vindicate, you, you can trust yourself to him who judges justly.

So would you escape the trap of fretting over the wicked? The answer. First and foremost is have the Lord. First of all, have Christ because I hear have the Lord alone as your hope have the Lord alone as your

happiness, and have the Lord alone as your help. And I think, well, I've failed on a B and C, but Christ has succeeded.

And if you have Christ, not only is his having done so perfectly. You know, the Psalm says of David is it's title, it's just one word in the Hebrew but David in this way was looking forward to the perfection of Christ. Not only will Christ himself and his delight in the Lord be counted for you.

But if you have Jesus, then you are also being made like Jesus, which means more and more you will trust and Yahweh. More and more, you will delight in Yahweh, more and more, you will commit your way to Yahweh. And so if we make our whole life, a continual exercise in having him, then we are as it were looking towards our end.

Having him means having something that can never be taken from you. And that's the remedy for not fretting over the wicked. How many believers I was gonna say especially in the last couple years, but it's probably in the last 6,000 years. It's the garden. How many believers are fretting over, what the wicked have and what the wicked are doing, or what the wiccan might be doing, when, if our whole life was about having the Lord and knowing that he can't be taken from us, then we would be able to obey this tiny little.

And yet life-changing, if we can, by the spirit applying Christ to a start to obey it, this tiny little command fret not fret, not wouldn't be marvelous if the Lord gave us. So to treasure him that we became people who didn't fret and what a contrast that would make us from the wicked.

Well, with our hearts warmed up by the word, let us come the Lord in prayer.