

PSALM THIRTY-SEVEN, TWENTY-THREE AND TWENTY-FOUR

Intro: If you have ever been bothered by the fact that people who do not know the Lord seem to get along so well, OR, if you have been bothered by the frustrations of waiting for the Lord to work for you, THEN PSALM THIRTY-SEVEN IS YOUR PSALM!

It is almost a Psalm of proverbs because David has followed the Hebrew alphabet in the writing of this Psalm. But this makes it even more possible for us to take verses out of the entire Psalm and find that they tell a story in themselves.

Such is the case with verses twenty-three and twenty-four.

First of all, we need to note that

- I. DAVID IS CONCERNED WITH A CHILD OF GOD: "The steps of a good man . . ."

A closer look into this word, "man," indicates some very interesting aspects. The word, "good," is not in the original, but it is included in the word which David uses for "man." He is talking about a good man.

But this is not all.

The word for man is taken from a root which speaks of strength. So, this is a good, strong man. From the context it would seem that these are spiritual qualities that the Psalmist has in mind (although perhaps we should not exclude the physical either).

But the point is this: We have a child of God, good and strong, with all of the marks of self-sufficiency, and he is concerned about his walk.

What does he need to know?

- II. SOME TRUTHS HE NEEDS TO KNOW.

- A. Our walk is made up of "steps."

This is a picture of a small child learning to walk, even though the reference has been to a good, strong man. If we are concerned about our walk, this must take precedence over the way and over the work.

- B. Our steps are established (a more accurate reading) by Jehovah.

This speaks of the strength to walk. We may be good, and strong, but we will never be able to walk apart from the

enabling power of God. Cf. Rom. 14:4,

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?
To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he
shall be held up; for God is able to make him stand."

Cf. Jer. 10:23,

"O Lord, I knew that the way of man is not in himself;
it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

- C. Such a walk pleases the Lord: "and He delighteth in his way."

The expression might be taken to mean that the man delights in the Lord's ways, but all through the Psalm David refers in several places to the reaction of the Lord to what men do. Cf. v. 13. Then, v. 28.

We find as we go on with the Lord that what brings blessing to us is always what is pleasing to the Lord. The word, "delighteth" means that He loves it, it pleases Him.

Cf. 1 Sam. 15:22. It is "not so much an intense pleasurable emotion, as a favorable disposition" (Girdlestone, p. 69).

- D. What it means when there is failure.

V. 24 deals exclusively with this. This is what so many of us do not understand. What happens in our relationship to God when there is sin?

The word, "fall," means to fall, to fail, to fall out or away, to desert, to deliberately fall.

Sometimes we fall because we are weak.

Sometimes we are tricked, or trapped, and we fall.

Sometimes we fall deliberately.

All mean failure in one way or another. Some teach that this means the loss of salvation. Some teach that this excludes from future blessing and service.

It obviously means that a good, strong man can fall, can fail--so we need to guard against it. But what is our hope when we do fall?

1. "He shall not be utterly cast down."

This can mean two things:

- 1) He will not lose his salvation.
- 2) He can surely get up again and walk.

"Fall" means to be cast down at full length, to be prostrated.

But there are no hopeless cases with the Lord. Cf. Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Jude 24, 25.

2. Why the above is true: "for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand."

The Lord is the One who keeps us from absolute and eternal disaster!

Cf. Psa. 145:14,
"The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all these who are bowed down."

Cf. Isa. 41:10,
"Fear thou not; for I am with thee. Be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Cf. the Psalmist's prayer in Psa. 119:117,
"Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually."

Cf. John 10:27-30,
"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Concl: One mistake that we make about a verse like this is that we apply it to ourselves, or to others, when we (or they) are just starting out, but we fail to see that there are not any age limitations indicated by this verse. I.e., an indication that this applies only until we have known the Lord so long. THIS ALWAYS APPLIES TO EVERY CHILD OF GOD!

But the key to these verses is not what they say about the "good man," but about what they say of the Lord!