

THE WAY OF PEACE IN PSALM THIRTY-SEVEN
Psa. 37:1-7

Intro: Every Psalm tells its own story. Most of them were written after the writer had passed through the crucible of human experience. No thought seems to be withheld. The Psalmists tell the Lord exactly what was going through their minds, and somewhere in the Psalms you can find the very expressions which at one time or another have flashed through your own mind.

But there is one distinct advantage to the Psalms. THE WRITERS WROTE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND, THEREFORE, WE NOT ONLY SEE THE REAL PROBLEMS OF LIFE, BUT WE SEE THE DIVINE ANSWER TO THOSE PROBLEMS.

The basic problem of Psalm 37 is this: If it is best to be a child of God, and to live for God, then why do we find that so many ungodly people are both happy and prosperous.

There are times when the world and sin look attractive even to the child of God.

One might even call this the Psalm of young people. It appears that David must have been far along in life when he wrote it, but he is expressing the questions which appear to us from early youth--questions which sometimes become too much for the child of God.

Let us note that it is not wrong to have the questions.

But let us also note that it is tremendously important to find the right answers.

Men have always been very determined in their sin, but there probably has never been a time when they have been more brazen than they are today. Everyone is out for a good time. Everybody wants peace. The question is: How do you get it?

I. First of all, we need to understand the destiny of the wicked.

This is what God wants us to know. Read vv. 1, 2, 9a, 10, 12-15, 20, 21a, 35, 36, 38.

Men are so absorbed in the pleasure of the moment that they hardly ever stop to think where their sins are leading them. In fact, we are seeing sin legalized, BUT THIS WILL NEVER CHANGE THE ETERNAL WORD OF GOD. GOD DECIDES WHAT SIN IS; MEN DO NOT!

- II. Secondly, we need to know the dangers that face us, living as we do in an evil world.

It is to be seen in v. 1, and is best described by the two words of exhortation: "Fret not" and "neither be thou envious."

From the language used, it appears that David is writing for some individual instead of a group--possibly for some one in his own family.

"Fret not" means don't let this bother you, don't get upset, don't become disturbed or agitated about things as they appear to be.

Life seems to contradict the Word of God, but keep your eyes on the Word as you look at life. David comes back to this same expression in vv. 7, 8.

But then he speaks of envy, jealousy.

ONE COULD
BE
CONTRAST

The point is this: Becoming overly disturbed about what you see in the world can lead to jealousy--a desire to participate in the very things you see.

Cf. Joseph's brothers in Gen. 37:8, 11.

Notice how Asaph in Psa. 73 was practically overcome by this very thing (vv. 1-3).

How often those who have tried to reform the world have gotten gobbled up by the very sins they started to oppose! Beware of fretting. It leads to envy.

- III. Thirdly, we need to know what action we can take to assure ourselves of the peace and happiness which God has promised us in His Word.

Let me put myself in the position of one who is wondering which way to go. I know the Lord, but I am at least entertaining the thought that sin cannot always be wrong. And yet the Word keeps warning me against the ways of ungodly men.

WHAT SHALL I DO?

- A. "Trust in the Lord, and do good" (v. 3a).

It is important to know what David means. The word that he uses here is a word which is always linked with the hope we have as the children of God.

It is different from "commit" in v. 5. Here David is pointing to the end, the hope, the goal of salvation. Note vv. 9, 11, 18, 22, 29, 34—all having to do with their inheritance, and from v. 11 and v. 37 their hope is related to the experience of "peace."

This is different for us in the Church today. Our hope is a heavenly hope. BUT THE PRINCIPLE IS EXACTLY THE SAME. When I act out of harmony with the goal of my salvation, I forsake the ground of my peace.

What is my hope? To see a world changed? ABSOLUTELY NOT. It is the realization that the only remedy for the ills of this world is in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are "looking for that blessed hope . . ." (Tit. 2:13).

So this is what he means by "trust"—HOPE.

B. "Delight thyself also in the Lord" (v. 4a).

Let me ask you a question. DO YOU REALLY ENJOY THE LORD? Do you enjoy His Word? Do you like to pray? Do you want to please Him? Do you desire to serve Him? Do you rejoice that you can trust Him?

If you delight yourself in the Lord, then you can enjoy the promise of v. 11.

Isaiah defines delighting in 58:13, 14.

Notice David's comment in Psa. 27:4.

Also Asaph in Psa. 73:25.

Or Moses in Ex. 33:15.

Ruth delighted in Naomi.

THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT IN THE LIFE OF ANY CHILD OF GOD THAN THAT WE LEARN TO DELIGHT OURSELVES IN THE LORD.

This naturally leads to the next which will be easy to do.

C. "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also--going back to the same verb in v. 3. (This statement: v. 5a).

This means literally to roll our way on the Lord. The world tries to get rid of its burdens in pleasure; you and I are to roll them off on the Lord. Cf. 1 Pet. 5:7.

But then what? Two other things which we may include under one heading, as they are both found in v. 7. The first is outward; the second is inward.

- D. Outwardly we are to "rest"; inwardly we are to "wait patiently" (v. 7a).

To "rest" is to be dumb, to be silent, to be still. Job's friends did this for seven days when they first came to see him, and it was the wisest thing that they did (Job 2:13).

If you are confused, don't spread your confusion to others. Be quiet!

"Wait patiently" for Him. You are dealing with Jehovah. All of these instructions have to do with the Lord. You are not dealing with men. They are not in control. The Lord is!

Read vv. 34-37.

Concl: Do you want to live with the peace of God in your heart? Then don't follow the world. They may enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season," but "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

You will talk to plenty of people who regret the times they have turned from the Word of God to their own ways, but you never meet a person who is disappointed in God when they have given their lives into His hands.

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