

GOD WILL NOT FORSAKE HIS SAINTS (1) – PSALM 37:1-20

INTRODUCTION

1. The thirty-seventh psalm is attributed to David, probably written later in his life, and is another of the wisdom psalms (*Ps. 37:25*).
2. It resembles many of the proverbs and focuses on the ultimate fate of the wicked despite their apparent ease and success in this life and the faithfulness of God.
3. This psalm has an acrostic arrangement, perhaps to help in memorization, but it is only complete in the odd numbered verses.
4. This psalm is quoted by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount and contains some of the most well-known and loved verses of the Old Testament (*Ps. 37:4-5, 16, 11*).
5. To some this psalm is an explanation about how the meek will inherit the earth.
6. Let us consider the lessons David puts forth as we are reminded that God will not forsake His saints.

DISCUSSION

I. STOP WORRYING ABOUT THE WICKED

- A. This psalm begins with an admonition that will be repeated three times; “Fret not” along with a warning not to be envious of the wicked (*Ps. 37:1, 7, 8*).
 - i. This word means to get agitated or heated up with the idea of anger.
 - ii. So basically, the psalmist is saying to calm down when you see the wicked are prospering (*Jas. 1:19; Eph. 4:26*).
- B. This isn’t an easy thing to do for the godly in the face of wickedness.
 - i. Every day we see corrupt and wicked politicians, celebrities, and businesspeople get richer and more powerful
 - ii. Every day we are bombarded with sinful images and messages.
 - iii. Many of us cannot stop comparing ourselves with those who live worldly and sinful lives and seem to be enjoying life in the midst of their wickedness.
- C. How can we avoid getting angry, envious, or anxious in light of the growth and spread of sin and evil in our day?
- D. The psalmist gives us at least two reasons we should not feel this way about the wicked and some practical things to help us to stop (*Ps. 37:2-11*).
- E. First, we need to stop focusing so much on the wicked and instead focus on God.
 - i. We do this by putting our trust in God, trusting in His promises and in His ways and then obeying Him (*Ps. 37:3; Matt. 22:36-39*).
 - ii. We need to find our joy and delight in God (*Ps. 37:4*).
 1. If we don’t find joy and delight in God’s perfect and complete love, mercy, and grace expressed in Jesus we just don’t know Him, and we probably aren’t spending enough time with Him.
 2. When we delight in Him, He will satisfy all the deep and true longings of our hearts (*1 John 5:3; 14-15*).
 - iii. We need to commit ourselves to God which is another way of saying we need to trust Him to care for us and to vindicate us (*Ps. 37:5-6; 1 Pet. 5:7*).

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- iv. We need to rest or to wait on the Lord (*Ps. 37:7*).
 - 1. This word can mean to stand still or be quiet (*Josh. 10:12; Lev. 10:3*).
 - 2. As Christians we must learn to do both and especially when the wicked seem to prosper.
- v. We also need to refrain from anger and wrath (*Ps. 37:8*).
 - 1. Again, we are told to stop fretting.
 - 2. Allowing ourselves to get angry only leads to sin (*Jas. 1:20-21*).
- F. The second thing the psalmist tells us to do that will help us stop worrying about the wicked is to look ahead to the future.
 - i. The wicked will not prosper forever, but like the grass of the field that is green in spring but dead by the end of summer so it they will appear and then perish (*Ps. 37:2, 10*).
 - ii. God will judge the wicked and save the righteous (*Ps. 37:9, 11; 73:18-20*).
- G. May we be encouraged the David's words so that we will be meek and trust in the Lord and stop fretting over the wicked (*Eph. 4:1-3*).

II. THE WICKED WILL PERISH

- A. In the second part of the psalm, much like the first and thirty-sixth psalm, the psalmist speaks of the way of the wicked and their terrible end.
- B. Though the wicked are hostile towards the godly, God laughs at them (*Ps. 37:12-13*).
 - i. The wicked are against the godly and hurt and disturb them in by sinful deeds, but they will not have the last laugh (*2 Pet. 2:8; 1 Pet. 4:4*).
 - ii. Their success will be short-lived, for God has determined that they will not succeed in the end (*Ps. 2:1-4; Ps. 35:7-8; cp. Luke 16:19-25*).
- C. No matter what scheme or weapon they use, God will ensure that the wicked fall by their own devices (*Ps. 37:14-15*).
- D. Therefore, it would be better to be righteous and impoverished than to be wicked and have plenty (*Ps. 37:16-17*).
- E. For God will preserve the righteous, but the wicked will perish (*Ps 37:18-20*).
- F. Today we are reminded of this truth as we observe the rich and powerful, celebrities and politicians, and others who are deceived and overtaken in sin; they rise and fall.
- G. May we remember that when all seems hopeless God is in control and to put our faith and trust in Him for He will have the last say (*2 Pet. 3:5-7; 2 Cor. 5:10*).

CONCLUSION

- 1. David will continue to revisit and develop these themes in the remainder of the psalm.
- 2. But for now, let us remember that the godly will have to confront evil in every age.
- 3. Instead of getting angry and anxious, we must be content and trust in God (*1 Tim. 6:6*).
- 4. Instead of focusing on the short-term success of the wicked, we must keep our eyes on Jesus and on the goal to which we are striving for (*Heb. 12:1-4*).
- 5. We must never forget that God will not forsake His saints (*Rom. 8:35-39*).