

Motivation for doing what's **right**...
in a world that's going so **wrong**.



Elements Class: Psalm 37 (Part2)
Sunday, May 15. 10:45am

This section can be organized into 4 categories;

**1. The futility
of the wicked life.**

**2. The superiority
of the righteous life.**

**3. The responsibility
of the righteous.**

**4. The destiny
of both.**

(12-13) The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him, but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming.

(14-15) The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose way is upright; their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

(16) Better is the little that the
righteous has than the
abundance of many wicked.

(17) For the arms of the wicked
shall be broken,
but the LORD upholds the
righteous.

(18-19) The LORD knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will remain forever; they are not put to shame in evil times; in the days of famine they have abundance.

(20) But the wicked will perish;
the enemies of the LORD are like
the glory of the pastures; they
vanish—like smoke they vanish
away.

(21-22) The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives; for those blessed by the LORD shall inherit the land, but those cursed by him shall be cut off.

(23-24) The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the LORD upholds his hand.

(25-26) I have been young, and now
am old, yet I have not seen the
righteous forsaken or his children
begging for bread. He is ever lending
generously, and his children become
a blessing.

(27) Turn away from evil and do good; so shall you dwell forever.

(28-29) For the LORD loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever.

**1. The futility
of the wicked life.**

*In verses 12-15 & 17 David expounds
on the life of the wicked.*

The wicked are plotting & gnashing their
teeth at the upright. They are drawing their
sword and fixing their bow to bring
destruction on the righteous.

Their efforts could be put in two categories:

1. Efforts to belittle, mock & frustrate the work of the upright.
2. Efforts to break, kill & destroy the life of the upright.

Ironically, the wicked receive the very demise they planned for the upright.

God laughs at the wicked and sovereignly turns their schemes against them. Their swords pierce their own heart and their bows & arms bent on evil shatter into pieces.

Application for us:

If you are living uprightly in a sinful world, you must be prepared to face attacks from those around you. Expect prejudice, animosity, anger, jealousy and attempts to destroy your work, your spirit and your life.

Application for us:

If you are a child of God, God promises to go to battle for you. God promises to protect you, to defend you and vindicate you.

**2. The superiority
of the righteous life.**

In verses 16-19 & 25-26 David examines the life of the righteous.

David says that the righteous have it much better. They will be upheld & receive an inheritance...even in famine they will have abundance. God is generous to them...so much so that they are a blessing to others.

In this section God promises
many things to the upright:

There are **17 promises** given to the upright in this section of verses...some are repeated or restated, which make **10 unique guarantees** to the believer.

#1

Attacks against the God-honoring, God-believing, God-obeying person will ultimately be futile. 2x (v12-15)

#2

The God-honoring person will actually have MORE with LESS than the wicked; who will have LESS with MORE. (v16)

#3

God will uphold the righteous in the midst of attacks and when they falter.

2X (v17, 24)

#4

God will give the upright an eternal, forever **inheritance** (heritage), they will be preserved forever.

3x (v18, 28-29)

#5

Even in the times of difficulty and evil,
the upright will not be put to shame.

(v19)

#6

Even in the times of difficulty and
famine (suffering, crisis), the upright
will have more than enough
(abundance). (v19)

#7

God will sustain the upright, enabling them to **give generously** and be a blessing to others. 2x (v21, 26)

#8

The upright will inherit the land
(Israel, Kingdom) and will dwell there
forever. 2x (v22, 29)

#9

God will watch over, guide & establish
the steps of the upright. (v23)

#10

The upright will never be **forsaken**,
whether in the times of earthy trouble or
eternal hope. 2x (v25, 28)

Application for us:

If you are a child of God, God promises to be and to do so much for you. Those promises should become the **framework** of your **faith** and the **foundation** for your **footing**.

Application for us:

Belief in the promises of God and the character & power of God to come through on those promises are truly the only thing that a believer has to hope in. Remembering them, reminding yourself of them, walking in them should be a daily function.

3. The responsibility of the righteous.

In verses 23, 27, 28 David summarizes the responsibility of the righteous.

David calls the righteous to **action**. The upright are to delight in walking with God, turn from evil & do good, while pursuing the justice that God loves.

In this section David mentions a few instructions (actions) to the upright:

There are **5 directives** given, several very directly and others clearly inferred.

#1

The upright should
turn away from evil. (v27)

#2

The upright should **do good**.

(v27)

#3

God loves justice and he will not forsake
those who pursue it. (**Pursue justice**)
(v28)

#4

The righteous should be **generous** and give to others in order to be a blessing.

(v21, 26)

#5

The believer should **order his steps by
delighting in the Lord.**

(v23)

A closer look: Verse 23

**The steps of a man are established by the
LORD, when he delights in his way...**
*though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong,
for the LORD upholds his hand.*

It is unclear (even in the Hebrew)
how this verse should read, mainly because of the
use of **the pronouns HE and HIS**.

If the pronouns are referring to God it renders
one meaning, if referring to the believer another.
Both meanings are very biblical & applicable:

Possibility 1:

The steps of a man are established
by the LORD, when God delights in
the believer's way...

Possibility 2:

The steps of a man are established
by the LORD, when the believer
delights in God's way...

From the context I believe
it is the latter;

The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when the man delights in God's way, *though the man fall, the man shall not be cast headlong, for the LORD upholds the man's hand.*

The best interpretation is to combine them:

(1) The steps of the believer will be firm & established by God, when God takes delight in the believers attitudes, actions and choices (way)... (2) and the way that the believer is able to please God in all his actions is to take true delight (joy) in the way (justice, mercy, purity) that God has established for man and to follow it.

Application for us:

The major application for us is that we must begin to **delight** (take joy, take pleasure, find the highest value) in God's prescribed way for living and therefore **desire** greatly to live in it.

Application for us:

If we focus on finding joy/delight in the ways of God (seeing them for our eternal benefit and ultimate well being)...
all other application & obedience will naturally follow.

**4. The destiny
of both.**

In verses 18-19, 13, 20, 22, 24
David covers the destiny of the
wicked & the righteous.

David clearly contrasts the destinies of the
upright & the wicked. The upright will receive
an inheritance & dwell forever with the Lord.
While the wicked will be cut off forever.

The destiny of the wicked: (a negative motivation for doing right)

The wicked will perish and vanish up in smoke. They will be cursed by the Lord and cut off forever. Their memory (legacy) will be blotted out forever.

The destiny of the righteous: (a positive motivation for doing right)

The upright will receive an inheritance & dwell forever with the Lord. The upright will be preserved forever and vindicated as righteous. Their memory (heritage) will be powerful and echo for ages.

The disparity of the joy, the
promises & the future
of the righteous & the wicked
is a great gulf!

It begs the question:

What is the
fundamental difference
between the righteous &
the wicked?

If the future is so good for the
righteous and so bad for the wicked,
it would be wise of us to know
clearly how to be 'counted righteous'
in God's eyes.

It is not sufficient to say that the fundamental difference is that the righteous believe **'the gospel'**. The gospel hasn't occurred... and the following words occur **0 times**;

Sin, Repent, Pray, Forgive, Forgiveness, Mercy, Grace, Cross, Altar, Blood, Sacrifice, Christ, Messiah, Atonement, Redeem, Redemption, Justify, Cover

The major words that do occur
in the entire Psalm are:

Delight, Desire: 4 times

Wait, Dwell, Still: 7 times

Future, the Days: 4 times

The first fundamental difference in the righteous is that they **delight themselves in the Lord himself and his ways**. They see his instruction as the root of ultimate joy and **they desire it above all**, and therefore obey it.

The **second fundamental difference** in the righteous is that they **are content to be still (cease their efforts) and wait for the Lord,** understanding that God will certainly do what he has promised.

(Including promises about the Messiah).

The third fundamental difference in the righteous is that they **are focused on, waiting for, trusting in a future day** when all of God's promises will be actualized. *(Including promises about the Messiah).*

What makes the wicked, wicked is that they **do not delight in the Lord & his instructions.** They **do not believe it will lead to ultimate joy** and **they strive in their own strength** to achieve satisfaction **now in the moment** and they **do not believe what God has said about their future days.**

These are fundamental characteristics in the wicked & righteous that repeat themselves all throughout the Bible. We could look at many examples such as Noah, Abraham & Moses and find them every time.