

The Wisdom of Psalm 37

SCRIPTURE

- ▶ Do not **fret** because of **evil men** or be **envious** of **those** who do wrong; (Psalm 37:1)
 - for like the **grass**, they will soon wither;
 - like **green plants**, they will soon die away. (Psalm 37:2)
- ▶ Trust in the **LORD** and do good; **dwell** in the land and enjoy safe pasture. (Psalm 37:3)
- ▶ Delight yourself in the **LORD**, and he will give you the **desires** of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)

SCRIPTURE

- ▶ Commit your way to the **LORD**; trust in him, and **he** will do this: (Psalm 37:5)
 - He will make **your righteousness** shine like the dawn,
 - the justice of **your cause** like the noonday sun. (Psalm 37:6)
- ▶ Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
 - do not **fret** when men succeed in their ways when they carry out their **wicked schemes**. (Psalm 37:7)
- ▶ Refrain from **anger** and turn from **wrath**; do not fret – it leads only to **evil**. (Psalm 37:8)

SCRIPTURE

- ▶ For **evil men** will be cut off, but **those** who hope in the **LORD** will inherit the land. (Psalm 37:9)
- ▶ A little while and the **wicked** will be no more;
 - though **you** look for them,
 - **they** will not be found. (Psalm 37:10)
- ▶ But the **meek** will inherit the land and enjoy **great peace**. (Psalm 37:11)

LUNCH AT FIRST WATCH

- ▶ Over **ten years** ago, I sat down to have lunch with someone who attends our church, and we had a very interesting conversation.
- ▶ I do not want to reveal the identity of this person—due to **pastoral confidentiality**, but I will give you a couple of hints.
 - 1) He used to play drums for our worship team, and
 - 2) He is married to the prettiest worship leader in our church.
- ▶ If somehow God opens your mind to the identity of this person, **please keep it to yourself**, as I would hate to embarrass anyone at our church.



CONVERSATION

- ▶ While we ate our lunch, we discussed how watching the **news** was like an *infomercial* for high blood pressure medicine.
- ▶ Again, this was over **10 years ago**, and things haven't gotten much better.
- ▶ In fact, it seems **things** have gotten a lot worse, and there are no **signs** that anything is really getting much better.
- ▶ In fact, I don't know about you, but I don't think there is any **"Blood Pressure"** medicine on the market that can take away all the **anxiety** that people are experiencing today.

FDA Consumer Health Information

Medications for High Blood Pressure

Some Types of High Blood Pressure Medications

Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors and Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARBs)
 relax blood vessels by blocking effects of a hormone that causes vessels to constrict

Beta Blockers
 reduce the workload of the heart. In part, by slowing heart rate

Calcium Channel Blockers (CCBs)
 directly relax blood vessels

Diuretics
 flush extra water and salt from body, decrease blood volume

stroke
heart attack
heart failure
kidney failure
death

High blood pressure is often called the "silent killer" because it usually has no symptoms until it causes damage to the body's vital organs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1 in 3 adults in the United States has high blood pressure, also called hypertension. High blood pressure is dangerous because it increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney failure, and death.

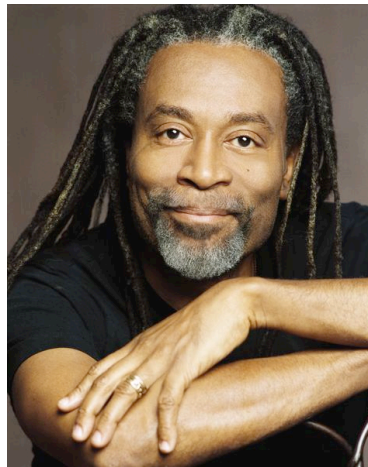
A Lifelong Condition
 Blood is carried from the heart to all parts of the body by vessels called arteries. Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. The higher the blood pressure, the greater the risk of stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney failure, and death.

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BOBBY MCFERRIN

- ▶ In 1988, **Bobby McFerrin** recorded the song **"Don't Worry, Be Happy,"** which became a **hit** and brought him widespread recognition across the world.
- ▶ The **song's success** "changed McFerrin's musical life as he had known it," and he began to **pursue** other musical possibilities on stage and in recording studios.
- ▶ The **song** was used as the official campaign song for **George H. W. Bush** in the **1988** U.S. presidential election.



DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY - LYRICS

- Here's a **little song** I wrote; you might want to **sing** it note for note. **Don't worry, be happy.**
- In every life, we have some **trouble**. But when you **worry**, you make it double. **Don't worry, be happy.**
- Ain't got no place to lay your **head**. Somebody came and took your bed. **Don't worry, be happy.**
- The **landlord** says your rent is late. He may have to litigate. **Don't worry, be happy.**

DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

- Ain't got no **cash**, ain't got no style. Ain't got no **gal** to make you smile. **Don't worry, be happy.**
- 'Cause when you **worry**, your face will frown. And that will bring everybody down. **So don't worry, be happy.**
- (Ooh, ooh ooh ooh oo-oooh ooh ooh oo-oooh)
- **Don't worry, be happy!**



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- ▶ "No one can serve **two masters**. (Matthew 6:24a)
 - Either he will **hate** the one and **love** the other, or
 - he will be **devoted** to the one and **despise** the other. (Matthew 6:24b)
- ▶ You cannot serve both **God** and **Money**." (Matthew 6:24c)
- ▶ Therefore, I tell **you, do not worry** about your life,
 - what **you** will eat or drink, or
 - about **your** body, what you will wear. (Matthew 6:25b)
- ▶ Is not **life** more important than **food**, and the **body** more important than clothes?" (Matthew 6:25b)

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- ▶ Look at the **birds** of the air;
 - they do not **sow** or **reap** or **store** away in barns, and
 - yet your **heavenly Father** feeds them. (Matthew 6:26)
- ▶ Are **you** not much more valuable than they? (Matthew 6:27a)
- ▶ Who of you, by **worrying**, can add a single hour to his **life**? (Matthew 6:27b)

IMPORTANT POINT

- ▶ So then, when things are **going wild** around us, controlling our **thought life** is very important as it affects our **behavior** and **relationship** with **God**.
- ▶ And the **key** to changing our **thought life** is renewing our minds, which happens as we follow **God's word**.
- ▶ When we walk out **God's word**, we draw close to God, and through this **intimacy**, we come to know **God's thoughts**—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.
- ▶ Now, guess what **God** said to me when I started to give into worry—**fretting** what was going on in the world?
- ▶ He said in that soft, quiet, still voice: "**Don't fret because you don't have to take care of the wicked; I will.**"

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE

- ▶ In Psalm 37, we have this plea . . . *Do not **fret** because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong . . .* (Psalms 37:1 NIV)
- ▶ In other words, don't **worry** about people who seem to be getting away with murder. Why? Because they're not going anywhere. God has got their number.
 - Don't get your **blood pressure** up.
 - Don't get bent out of shape **worrying** about the **wicked**.
- ▶ I don't know about you, but it is a marvelous and calming **relief** to know that **I don't have to take care of the wicked all by myself**.

THE WICKED WILL BE CUT OFF

- ▶ In Psalm 37, there are 40 verses, and four times, there is this awesome phrase: **"They shall be cut off."**
- ▶ *A little while and the wicked will be **no more**; though you look for them, they will not be found.* (Psalms 37:10)
- ▶ *I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a green tree in its native soil, but he soon **passed away and was no more**; though I looked for him, he could not be found.* (Psalms 37:35-36)
- ▶ *Like the grass, **they** will soon wither; like green plants, **they** will soon **die away**.* (Psalms 37:2)
- ▶ In fact, *the **Lord** laughs at the wicked, for he knows **their day** is coming.* (Psalms 37:13)

THE WAYS OF THE WICKED

- ▶ *The **wicked** plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them . . .* (Psalms 37:12 NIV)
- ▶ *The **wicked** draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright.* (Psalms 37:14 NIV)
- ▶ *The **wicked** borrow and do not repay, . . .* (Psalms 37:21 NIV)
- ▶ *The **wicked** lie in wait for the righteous, seeking their very lives . . .* (Psalms 37:32 NIV)

INSTRUCTION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

- ▶ So in the mean time, what should the **righteous** do?
 - *Trust in the **LORD** and do good . . .* (Psalms 37:3 NIV)
 - *Delight yourself in the **LORD** . . .* (Psalms 37:4 NIV)
 - *Commit your way to the **LORD**; trust in him. . .* (Psalms 37:5 NIV)
 - *Be still before the **LORD** and wait patiently for him; . . .* (Psalm 37:7a)
 - *Do not **fret** when **men** succeed in their ways . . .* (Psalms 37:7b NIV)
- ▶ By the way, what does **"to fret"** mean?
 - According to the dictionary, to **fret** means to **express** anxiety, worry, annoyance, contempt, discontent, anguish, sorrow, mope, fuss, complain, grumble, whine or stew, and the like.

WHY FRET NOT

► Why should we **not** fret?

- *Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret – it leads only to evil.* (Psalms 37:8 NIV)
- In other words, **worry** and **frustration** can lead to anger, and anger can lead to us doing and saying things we wish we hadn't.
- So, instead of **blowing up** our enemies, we should do good and wait patiently for the Lord, who will soon deal with the situation if we don't get in the way.

QUESTION

► Let me ask a question here,

- How many **conflicts** have been started because certain people didn't commit their way to the Lord?
- How many **friendships** and **marriages** have been broken all because someone couldn't refrain from evil?
- How many **good jobs** have been lost all because of the rotten attitudes we developed by not delighting ourselves in the Lord?
- In other words, how many **problems** have we created for **ourselves**, by giving into the temptation of worrying and fretting about our circumstances?

BLESSINGS FOR TRUSTING GOD

► However, what happens when we **trust** in the Lord?

- *dwell in the **land** and enjoy **safe pasture**.* (Psalms 37:3 NIV)
- *He will give you the **desires** of your heart.* (Psalms 37:4 NIV)
- *He will make [our] **righteousness** shine like the dawn, the **justice** of [our] cause like the noonday sun.* (Psalms 37:6 NIV)
- *The days of the **blameless** are known to the LORD, and their **inheritance** will endure forever.* (Psalms 37:18 NIV)
- *In **times of disaster** they will not wither; in days of **famine** they will enjoy plenty.* (Psalms 37:19 NIV)

TURN FROM EVIL

- **Turn from evil and do good;** then you will dwell in the land forever. For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the **wicked** will be cut off; the righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever. (Psalms 37:27-29)
- **Wait for the LORD and keep his way.** (Psalms 37:34)
- The **LORD** helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the **wicked** and saves them because **they take refuge in him**. (Psalms 37:40)

TAKING REFUGE IN THE LORD

- ▶ So, according to **Psalm 37**, how do you take refuge in the **Lord**?
 - **Turn from evil and do good.** (v. 37:27)
 - In other words, we take **refuge in the Lord** when we submit to His will and follow His word.
 - As it says in Proverbs 30, *Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.* (Proverbs 30:5 NIV)
 - How **great** is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take **refuge** in you. (Psalms 31:19)

WHY WORRY?

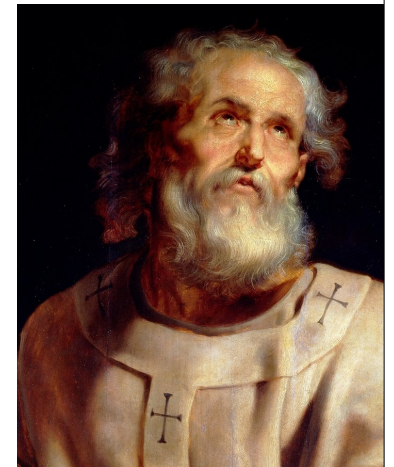
- ▶ The **wicked** are completely out of our hands. God will deal with them when it is appropriate, and only He knows when that time will come.
- ▶ What is under our control is how we **respond** to it and—far more importantly—how we handle what God has given us.
- ▶ No doubt, if we all take an inventory of our lives, we will find ourselves surrounded by **good things**.
- ▶ Why would we fix our eyes on others and **worry** about what they have or don't have and what they're doing or not doing?
- ▶ Unless **God** has placed us in **an area** of doing something about it, we should stop worrying about the wicked and **enjoy** the life God has given us.

SUMMARY

- ▶ Let us take control of our thoughts and **stop worrying** about what others are doing or not doing.
- ▶ **God is in control.** Let us show everyone **we** trust in the Lord, and let **us** delight ourselves in Him who is faithful.
- ▶ As the Scripture says, when we commit our way to the **Lord** and do what is right, *he will give [us] the desires of our heart.* (Psalms 37:4 NIV)
- ▶ In other words, if we want to be blessed and see good days, let us **refrain** from evil and **do** good.

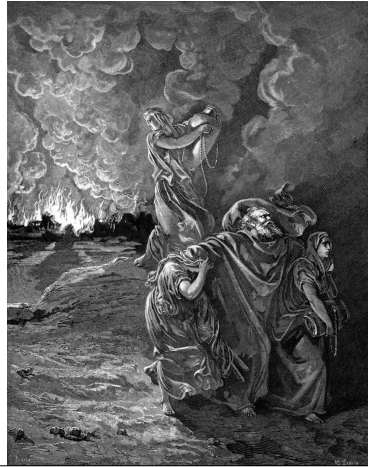
SUMMARY

- ▶ For if **God** did not **spare angels** when they **sinned**,
 - but sent them to **hell** (*Tartarus*), putting them into **gloomy dungeons** to be held for **judgment**. (2 Peter 2:4)
- ▶ For if **he** did not spare the **ancient world** when he brought the **flood** on its **ungodly people**
 - but protected **Noah**, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others. (2 Peter 2:5)



SUMMARY

- ▶ For if **he** condemned the cities of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** by burning them to ashes and made them an **example** of what is going to happen to the ungodly (2 Peter 2:6)
 - [But] **rescued Lot**, a righteous man who was distressed by the **filthy lives** of lawless men (2 Peter 2:7)
 - (for that **righteous man**,
 - living among them day after day,
 - was **tormented** in his righteous soul
 - by the **lawless deeds** he saw and heard) (2 Peter 2:8)



CONCLUSION

- ▶ If this is so, then the **Lord** knows how to
 - **rescue godly men** from trials and
 - to hold the **unrighteous** for the day of judgment while continuing their **punishment**. (2 Peter 2:9, See also Romans 1:18-32)
- ▶ Therefore, **God** can do **two things** at the same time.
 - He can **punish** and continue his **punishment** of the **wicked**.
 - He can **rescue** us who are grieved over the **ungodly**.
- ▶ So then, in the meantime, **“Don’t Worry, Be Happy!”**