

Psalm 37

by Henry Law

Psalm 37 teaches that while the wicked may prosper temporarily, true happiness and security belong to the righteous who trust in the Lord.

Scripture: Psalm 37:1-25

Topics: "Trusting God", "Righteous Living"

Description

Henry Law preaches on the temporal prosperity of wicked men that soon vanishes, contrasting it with the true happiness of the godly. He emphasizes the importance of trusting in the Lord, delighting in Him, committing our ways to Him, and resting patiently in His promises. Law highlights the ultimate fate of the wicked, the inheritance of the meek, and the assurance that the steps of the righteous are ordered by the Lord. He encourages believers to depart from evil, do good, and dwell forevermore in the love and security of God.

Transcript

The temporal prosperity of wicked men soon vanishes. True happiness is the portion of the godly. May such be our lot!

1, 2. "Do not fret because of evil-doers, neither be envious against the workers of iniquity; For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb."

Wisdom here speaks from the high throne. Prosperity may smile at the bright circumstances of the wicked. But let not our eyes view grudgingly. How long will it continue? Their mirthful day is as the life of the frail grass. Its greenness is for a little moment; it soon dies.

3, 4, 5, 6. "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noon-day."

We see here the path in which true blessedness abounds. It is here depicted as unwavering faith--the exercise of every Christian grace, the choice of God as all delight, and total surrender of our ways to Him. Then no good thing will be withheld. Every holy desire will be gratified. God will maintain our cause. No clouds of calumny shall obscure our righteous dealings. Our integrity shall brightly shine as the sun at

midday.

7, 8. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not yourself in anyway to do evil."

The happiest posture of the soul is calm repose in God--a patient trust in His all-ruling hand. The natural heart may feel the stir of irritation, when evil plans obtain success. Let grace prevail to deaden such motions, and to guide far from outbreaks of vexation.

9, 10, 11. "For evil-doers shall be cut off; but those who wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

Envy will die, if the true end of evil be remembered. Their transient joy leads to uttermost woe. Their little flare subsides in blackness of darkness forever. But what sweet prospects shine before the meek servants of the Lord! What precious promises allure them! We look for the new heavens and the new earth, where righteousness dwells. We know that yet a little while and He who shall come will come, and will not tarry. Then the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, and we shall reign with Him forever and ever!

12, 13, 14, 15. "The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him; for He sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as are of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken."

We are tempted to repine when all is bright around the wicked. We are more tempted to despond when their malignity is rampant. But how different will be our feeling when we discern that all their malice is their own injury! The Lord's hand so rules their violence, that their blows fall on themselves; their swords are sheathed in their own hearts; they fight against themselves; they shall fall self-slain. When faith sees things in true light, it will be no more sad. No fears will trouble. Security will be realized.

16, 17. "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken; but the Lord upholds the righteous."

The blessing of the Lord gives worth to riches, and dignifies the poorest lot. With the Lord's smile the humble table is rich; without it the tables of the wealthy contain no comfort. Soon the wicked will be crushed, while the righteous rise to glory!

18, 19, 20. "The Lord knows the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away."

All good is pledged to the sons of God in time and through eternity. The plenty granted to the wicked only fattens them for the day of slaughter. As curling smoke soon vanishes, so shall they disappear. May these warnings not be lost! May the Spirit bring the promises with power to our hearts!

21, 22. "The wicked borrows and does not repay; but the righteous shows mercy and gives. For such as are blessed of Him shall inherit the earth; and those who are cursed of Him shall be cut off."

If abundance flows into the coffers of the wicked, it soon flows out; destitution then comes in. Help from others must be sought; and dishonesty holds back repayment. The righteous, from his humble store, is able to be kind and generous. The blessing of the Lord is on them, and shall place them as heirs of that world where all things are new. But the curse devotes the wicked to eternal woe.

23, 24. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delights in His way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand."

What precious truths here offer comfort! Our path seems sometimes to be dark; but let us seek the Spirit's guidance, and plead this promise, which ensures right direction, and God's smile upon our path. Our weak steps too often totter, and Satan seems ready to cast us down; but help from heaven is near. We are not left to lie in mire of sin. We are not finally cast off. God's hand uplifts us, and gives sure support until life's journey ends.

25, 26. "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; and his seed is blessed."

The Psalmist states the experience of a long life. Kindness and liberality are signs of grace. The good man leaves a legacy of blessing to his children. The smile of the Lord shines upon children's children.

27, 28, 29. "Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore. For the Lord loves judgment, and forsakes not His saints; they are preserved forever; but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell there forever."

The Spirit multiplies grand promises to enrich the followers of Christ. What a cluster here sparkles! The love of God will always beam upon their path. No real desertion shall ever leave them helpless. Security is the realm in which they dwell. The full inheritance of faith is theirs. Eternity is the measure of their happiness. May the Spirit fix these truths upon our hearts, and help us mightily to depart from evil, and to do good! May our holiness be sure evidence that we have received grace!

30, 31. "The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide."

Here is the portrait of the blessed Jesus. Grace was ever poured upon His lips. His words were perfect wisdom. His heart was love without alloy. His feet were ever steadfast in untainted holiness. Such is our bright example. May our distinction ever be the mouth of wisdom, the innocent tongue, the heart of love, the upright walk!

32, 33. "The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged."

The words are primarily predictive of our ever-blessed Head. Spies marked His words and ways. The cry was, Crucify Him! Crucify Him! A mock trial preceded condemnation. But iniquity could not prevail. He rose the Conqueror of death. He mounted to the right hand of God.

The servants must not expect to find more kindness. But let not the righteous fear persecutions. They strengthen faith; they ripen grace; they give occasion for faithful testimony. They prove reality of grace. They lead to sure deliverance and final glory.

34, 35, 36. "Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green baytree; yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yes, I sought him, but he could not be found."

Line upon line, precept upon precept, forbid impatience. They call to the patience of hope and the obedient course. The promise is again and again repeated that we shall dwell eternally blessed in a new scene.

A vivid picture shows how short-lived is ungodly prosperity. We see a tree of verdant beauty. Deep are its roots. Wide spreading are its branches. We admire it today. Tomorrow we seek it, and it is gone. Thus while we gaze, the wicked pass away.

37, 38. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off."

Can we claim interest in these descriptions of God's children? If so, let us cast off all fear. Many may be our troubles on the stormy billows of time; but we shall in perfect peace enter the eternal haven. The ungodly have their voyage of restlessness, and their end is misery.

39, 40. "But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him." Salvation is a free-grace gift. God wills it. God achieves it. God bestows it. The gift is without repentance. It is never recalled. The saved are forever saved. No enemy shall prevail. God, by His Spirit, works faith in their hearts. They trust in Him. He strengthens. He upholds. He calls to heaven. And heaven they attain.

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