

One of my favorite movies this past year was **Secretariat**. It was the compelling story of Penny Chenery, the owner of what would become the most famous horse in all of racing history. If any horse was ever worthy of admiration, Big Red (as he was called) certainly was. His specialty seemed to be coming from behind to win by a huge margin.

What was clear in the movie... is that Miss Chenery did more than just admire Secretariat. She placed all of her hope in him. She sacrificed her family, her marriage and all her finances for the hope of glory in the horse it winning big.

In effect... Secretariat was her god; she wanted to ride his coattails to glory.

In the movie... we got to go along for the ride....wondering if the horse would come through for her...

Clinching our hands together in every race... cheering "C'mon Red!".... as his jockey would hold him back until the final turn and then let him pour on his supernatural speed to leave the pack in his dust....

One particular race....however, Secretariat **lost**. He failed to come through....

And the people who had invested their lives in him... turned on each other as a result. They despaired... they got angry.... they cast blame.... and they all wondered if he would be able to come through for them in the bigger races which lie ahead...

I wonder, this morning.... who or what are **you** hoping will come through for you?

As you struggle with temptations and what is often the monotony of daily life...?

Who.... or What....are you looking to as your Deliverer?

In Psalm 37... the Holy Spirit teaches NOT to rely on anyone or anything except God Himself. I have entitled our study of this Psalm....

God Will Come Through for You

Since only God controls everything..... since He is Sovereign..... since **Providence** is completely according to His plan....

He alone should be **looked to**.... and relied upon..... to bring about the **DESIRED END** which He has promised to His children....

Psalm 37 is unlike most of the other Psalms.... In that not one phrase in all 40 verses is a prayer... nor is there a single time when David expresses Praise directly to the Lord (like he does so often in others)....

Instead 37 is all **INSTRUCTION**....

I am going to divide our study of it into **two parts**.... (this week and next) under the same heading....

I want to encourage you to camp out in it this week in your devotions... for we need these realities **graven deeply** into our minds....

In the Hebrew **Ps. 37** is an **acrostic** – (like Ps. 119) with the first letter that begins each new stanza being a successive letter of the Hebrew Alphabet....

That made it easier for the Israelites to MEMORIZE.....
so they could call it to mind to SING it on their bed.... and while they were working.....

Just like we should do....

So that this **control center** (called your mind) can be continually refreshed with the **Promises of God**...and your life can be directed according to **faith** in what He has **said** He will do for you.... instead of what your eyes see happening in the moment...

That is the heartbeat of the Psalm..... walk by FAITH in God's Providence... **NOT** by sight in what you see the wicked doing around you.....

God **Will** Come Through For You
(therefore)

1. Fretting is Not an Option.

Perhaps no sin in recorded history has been so tolerated within the hearts of believers as **FRETTING**.

Fretting is a type of anxiety.... a type of **fear** that generates **friction** in our soul. (the Heb. word literally means to **heat up**)

It is the exact **opposite** of Faith.

Relying upon what God says is going to happen to you.... yields peace... **well being**...
REST.

Fretting produces anxiety.... anger.... -> **bitterness** of soul

So at those moments... (however many of them there are throughout your day....)
when you find yourself NOT believing God will come through for you....

When you look around you and COMPARE your circumstances to those who seem to be getting a **better deal**.....

You WILL be tempted to become **agitated** in your heart.....through envy and fretting...

David says.... don't **permit** your heart to go there.... it is no longer an option....

Psalm 37:1-2

" Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb."

Wasn't it just 2 short months ago that I stood here and we rejoiced together at how beautiful the color of the **spring grass** was??

Now look at your yard. Brown as Texas.

Likewise, the blessings of the ungodly (which your flesh tempts you to seek after)....are here today and gone tomorrow....

The wicked who live across the street from you... or work in your office...

That seem to **not** have **a care in the world**.... who numb themselves with alcohol or drugs or constant ENTERTAINMENT.....or even the successes of WORK....

will **fade quickly** like the grass....

You must learn to RECOGNIZE when fretting is beginning to occur in your heart....

- instead of tolerating it as something **normal**...

Some dear Christians I know.....never seem to be without something they are worried about.....

That is **normative** for their soul... they accept it as being okay....

Their mindset is.....

If you can't do anything else about the situation... at least you can **fret** about it....and it will produce **something**....

This Psalm tells us you are right..... fretting **does** produce something.... it **gnaws** at our soul.... and it soon leads us to evil doing....

- like Gossip – to make ourselves feel better
- or stealing – to try and right the scales of injustice..

Subconsciously I believe people who habitually FRET think that they are **oysters**.....

You know how when an unwanted substance gets in the mantle of an oyster....(inside its shell).... the irritation it causes.... ultimately produces a **pearl**?

Fretting ONLY produces **bad** fruit..... not pearls...

It is a substitute activity for faith.

Psalm 37:8-9

Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! **Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.** For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who **wait** for the LORD shall inherit the land."

- When you **brood** or stew over a situation you can't change
- When you rehearse over and over some **perceived wrong** done to you.....
- The next time you find **resentment** stirring in your soul.....

Realize that you are in the process of crossing over into the enemy camp.....

Because Fretting leads **ONLY** to evil ...

And **EVILDOERS** will be CUT OFF from the inheritance you are promised....

God wants you to learn to **RECONGIZE** and Repent of that..... as being JUST as wicked as whatever WRONG you are lamenting....

- Anything you are FRETTING about this morning?

Anything **stewing** in your pot?

Identify it.....Label it as an **intruder**..... an enemy of the **GOODNESS** God wants you to live out of by faith.... and turn from it as SIN.

Acknowledge that FRETTING... does not change anything.....but it will only lead you into actions that are in **opposition to God**.

It is a **subversive** activity...

The reason you don't HAVE to fret.... is that **we** have a **FUTURE!** An endowment from God Himself....

Sealed by the covenant of the blood of His own Son.

GOD Himself promises to **come through** for you..... He does not want you heating up on the inside because you do not currently **see things** going your way....

Keep track of your core temperature..... the state of your heart....

God wants you to REFRAIN from fretting.... **by realizing** that the people you so want to be like are UNDER A CURSE....

Psalm 37 is a continual refrain of the Promise that God will Come through for YOU.... (who are redeemed from your sin by His grace)..... but that the wicked remain UNDER His wrath.....

God's Word tells us He has cursed the wicked...with everlasting **RUIN** and destruction in hell..... unless they repent...

BELIEVING that reality.... not only helps you see **them** in proper perspective.... (so you will be motivated to share the gospel with those who are perishing)...

But BELIEVING in God's curse upon the wicked will deliver you from **envying** them...

God Will Come Through For You

2) **Believe** in God's **Curse** upon the Wicked

Superstitious people are yet another evidence that God created us to have faith in something. Athletes... are notoriously superstitious....

They believe in the curse of bad luck....

If the bats in a baseball dugout are not arranged in a certain way....it is bad luck....and your team will not win.

In Hockey if you happen to mention that to a goalie that the other team has not yet scored..... that you all are shutting them out..... he will likely go berserk.... because that is BAD LUCK... it assuredly means that they are going to score very soon.....

What is funny, athletes tell me.... is that the more you hear these things repeated.... you slowly begin to believe them yourself!

Throughout this Psalm.... David keeps on contrasting the curse of the wicked with the future of God's people....

So you will BELIEVE it as a reality....and it will shape how you think about them and yourself.

The next time someone gets the business deal you had worked so diligently on....by **underhanded means...**

As your neighbors gain friends by flattery and charm.... or even by bribe...

Remember how **DARK** God says their future is.....it is out of THAT context... that you are ready to receive the PROMISE of what God has in store for those who **love** Him.

Just listen to the curses upon the wicked here in our Psalm:

God tells them:

v. 2 - 'You will **wither**' (like brown grass)..

v. 9 – “You will be **cut off**” – like a branch that is **severed** from the vine

v. 10 – “You will be **no more**..”

v. 13 – “Your day of **horror** is coming..”

v. 15 – “Your sword shall enter your own heart”

v. 17 - “Your arms will be **broken**”

v. 20 – “You will vanish like smoke”

v. 22, 28 – “You and your children are **cursed** and will be **cut off** (altogether destroyed)..

Believing that such eternal destruction awaits those who walk according to their **own rule**.....

Helps save you from envying and resenting them in day to day life....

It is not popular in our culture to draw a line of distinction between the righteous and the wicked.... but **God** does.... and so should you...

Whereas if it were not for the grace of God..... we would ALL be in the same boat....

BECAUSE of God’s mercy in the gospel.... He has redeemed us from the curse...**so that** we could trust in HIM!

Psalm 37:3

"**Trust** in the LORD, and **do good**; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness."

Savings accounts or personal investments are **wise** uses of ones money.....

The story of Joseph in Egypt affirms that....

But there is a reason these investments are sometimes called **SECURITIES**....

We subtly begin to find **assurance** of our future well being based upon how much money we have in the bank....

We can begin to BANK on our storehouse... instead of God.

David is teaching us here that what you are to BANK on... is the reality that **God** **exercising** PROVIDENCE over your future.....

God Will Come Through For You

3) **Bank on** God's Providence

God is not making up life as we go along.... He is not reacting to what He reads in the news...

God is in **Control**. Period. _> therefore.... we can trust Him with everything....and carry out whatever He calls us to **do**.

I suspect that in many of your lives..... there is some **looming uncertainty**....that you are actually using as an excuse for not being engaged in the work God has called you to do....

By entrusting (that situation) into the hands of this covenant keeping.....Sovereign God..... you will be freed up to **DO** the good work He has called you to....

Faith in God..... is designed to be a springboard into ACTION.

Some of you are so absorbed in fretting about why your present is not better..... you coast along in neutral.... rather than actively investing yourself in the very things God has put you here to DO!

If you TRUST in the Lord....then....engage in Kingdom work.... as the **fruit** of your faith.

This is the reality Jesus is fleshing out in John 15... where He says to ABIDE in the Vine.... in order that you might bear much fruit.... for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Those **works**....(those things you have done by faith) will be the evidence on the last day.....that you TRUSTED in the Lord... and He will reward you ACCORDINGLY....

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has **done**."

It is OUT of your simple reliance upon God.... that you can do great things **for** God!

David goes on....

"Dwell in the Land and befriend / cultivate / **follow after** FAITHFULNESS.

This is an imperative command....and so it has both **immediate** and eternal applications...

In the Ancient times... LAND was the key to prosperity..... If you have LAND you can have livestock.... water..... maybe even vineyards.....fig trees....

Without LAND.... you are a pauper....a **nomad**....

The wicked (who have no inheritance in God) were out to **GRAB** all the land they could....

They will take it by force or scheme a way to make it **THEIRS!**

But in the Promised Land..... Israel dwelled **SECURE**.... under the covenant faithfulness of God....in the midst of the land

Because it was their Promised Inheritance.... as long as they trusted Him ... they could enjoy **repose** in the Land... without fear...

Likewise.....God wants your heart to dwell securely in **the inheritance** He has promised YOU....so that the **SECURITY** of that everlasting HOME can be yours now, by faith.

That is why Peter rejoices in this:

1 Peter 1:3-5

" Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his **great mercy**, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to an inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

If you are a follower of Jesus.... if you have realized that your sin makes you among the wicked.....

And that you were under the curse of the wrath of God.....

But according to His great **MERCY**.... God sent His Son to DIE in your place on the cross... and to be RAISED from the dead..... never to die again....

So that...as you BELIEVE that good news.....you have eternal.... everlasting... unending LIFE in His Name....

Then YOU ALONE can LIVE out of the good of that inheritance.... right now... by faith.

You can BELIEVE that God is exercising His good Providence to protect you.... for that inheritance....

That by drawing on the riches of His Perfect Faithfulness..... you can DWELL securely here.....

In whatever hellish circumstances you find yourself in.....

KNOWING that a DAY is coming.... when your eternal inheritance will be revealed for all to see...

So that even if the economy continues to tank..... and even if the gov't finally acknowledges that is out of money....

- God will **STILL** be faithful to exercise specific care over the details of you're your present and **your** future.

God is forever FAITHFUL to you....so that you can learn to be faithful back to Him in return...

You can RELY on His Providence.....because He is God.

Strangely enough..... ☺ He does not intend this to be **drudgery**.... He wants it to be the HAPPIEST experience you have ever had:

Psalm 37:4

"Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Some of you might say that you are not a PEOPLE person... maybe you get your strength from being **alone**....nothing wrong with that....

But regardless of your personality..... each of you were made FOR **a PERSON**....

That is the Lord Jesus Christ...

Through the gospel... your heart has been recreated in Jesus.... so that as you seek to KNOW Him.... to find Delight in the richness of **Who He is**.... you will find a happiness in your soul that no man can take away...

He is a **FRIEND** who sticks closer than a brother.

When you are lonely.... His kind compassion is readily available to you.....

He will SPEAK to your soul through His Word in ways that give you peace...and joy..

He will listen to the deepest longings of your heart.... and the deepest pains.....

And in the process of you SEEKING to be **filled with Him**..... you will find the rumblings of your heart **quieted** and reposed...

You will find Him taking care of EVERY one of your needs....

That is how David can say:

Psalm 37:16

"Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of **many** wicked."

BETTER off.... is a man who is RIGHT with God... by the mercy of God...

Than the sum total of the wealth of everyone in your neighborhood.....

BETTER off are you who are filled with JESUS..... and believe that He will never leave you or forsake you....

Than if you made what the CEO of Apple makes....and knows not His Creator.

The deepest desire of your heart..... is to be known and loved by God and by His people....

ALL the rest is extra..... it is icing on a cake that is already delicious by itself.

Delight yourself in the LORD... and He will give you the desires of your heart.

What is your DESIRE this morning..... What part of your heart is empty and in need of filling?

Psalm 16:5-9

"The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure."