

This outcropping is part of a mountain in South Dakota. Since God often treats inanimate objects like this as people... in order to prove a point in Scripture...

I want to ask you to pretend for a moment that **you are** this rock outcropping.

You recall that both the OT and the new Rocks are said to cry out to God...

So, bear with me in this for a moment....

Here you are....

Ever since the waters receded from the flood, thousands of years ago....

Life has been pretty predictable for you.. The sun has come up warming your face..... birds have nested in your crevices..... trees have grown at your feet....

As winter approaches you have enjoyed the refreshing snow cover for several months only to feel the pleasure of the ice melting and running graciously off your sides.....

But something began to happen in **1927** and life was NEVER the same after that day....

Some men showed up with binoculars....and large rolls of paper in their hands and they pointed at you most of the day....while they talked among themselves....

It was nice to get some human **attention**..... you overheard one of them say that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.....

Sounds good, you thought..... I like me.... I am glad to know that God does too....

But then, a few months later they showed up again....and by the next morning they began blasting away large chunks of your granite with dynamite..... Day after day.....parts of you that you have grown very comfortable withbegan to be painfully and forcibly removed from you....

Oowww! God... I am crying out here! **What are You doing??**

This does not feel so wonderful! I kind of prefer my old loneliness to **this!** Can we rethink this plan?

No sooner did the blasting die down than the men showed up with drills and began making holes in your granite...so they could remove smaller chunks....in the same area where they had been blasting....

They were certainly up to **something**? But what? The only comfort you have is that they seem to be taking directions from the Supervisor at the bottom as he looks at those large scrolls of paper....

Next, men with jackhammers and chisels arrive and they are intensely focused on reshaping you....

What is going on!?

- Do you ever feel like that?

These rocks did.... the most frustrating part is that for the next 14 years..... as soon as the blasters, drillers, chiselers seemed to be done with reshaping **one** part of you.... they moved to another area.... and started the same process.....

What is God Doing?

You have probably caught on by now.... that this rock outcropping....after many years of work... became **THIS**.

Take note of this large pile of discarded granite down here.....

But guess what? The mountain itself.....(who you have been pretending to be).... never could **see** this finished product....

The **Artists** could..... the craftsmen could.

But best of all.... it brought great glory to the Presidents in whose image the rocks had been shaped into....as thousands of people still come each year to admire this “new creation.”

Even though (as Christians) we KNOW that God is working all things together for good in our lives..... we **know** that we are new creations in Christ Jesus.... and that we will understand it better by and by.....

But.....It is still painful and often foggy in the midst of the process.....is it not?

Do you not sometimes find yourself asking.....

God, What Are You Doing?

in the midst of your going through the trials.... (that feel like explosions)..... the constant friction between what your flesh wants and what God wants....

the **chiseling** of God using other people to CHANGE you from what you were comfortable with.... to the person He wants you to beto **reflect His glory**....

It is often a confusing process when you are in the midst of it.... but it is **ALWAYS** worth it on the other side....

Last week.... we were reminded from **Psalm 37**.... that regardless of how **bleak** your situation LOOKS right now..... that God WILL come through for you in the end.....

He is **FAITHFUL** to His people.... and will never abandon them into enemy hands...

IF you belong to Him... through faith in Jesus....

By faith in His promises you can **keep on banking** on His Providence to prevail in what may seem like a **no-win** situation for you...

Today.... I want us to grab hold of (what I see as) the other main teaching point of this Psalm..... that is God giving you (through His promises) the **ANSWER** to this question we often ask....

I believe that I will ultimately be DELIVERED....But...What about the Mean Time?.....

What on earth is God seeking to accomplish through this mess I keep going through:

God, What are You Doing?

1. He is Bringing Out the Righteousness of Christ

Famous **sculptors** have been quoted as saying... that the masterpiece was present in the rock... or the clay...or the bronze all along.... it just needed someone to come along and **BRING it out**.....

God DOES that with Christians..... First through the gospel.... He redeems them from their broken sinful state.... depositing the PERFECT masterpiece of Jesus's righteous life in their soul....

Then... he spends the rest of their life on earth.... masterfully WORKING out... that righteousness into their daily lives as they cooperate with him by faith.

That is how... from start to finish....God can say:

Psalm 37:39a

"The salvation of the **righteous** is from the LORD;

He **SAVES** sinners...from the hell fire they deserve.... by Sovereignly bringing them the Good News that even though they deserve to perish because of their sin..... He loves them so much that He has sent Jesus to live the **perfect life** (which each of us have failed to live)... and to **DIE** as the sacrifice for their sin on the cross....

Jesus BECAME sin.... on that cross..... your sin nature... and mine.... was credited to JESUS...

And God poured out every drop of punishment for your sin...onto His own Son.....

So that as He died.... every one of your sins was fully **ATONED for**.....

So you can freely ask Him to forgive you as you believe that to be true...and He **DOES!**

Secondly.... (best of all) God **credits** YOU....(as a free gift) with the perfect righteousness of Jesus!

Nothing less will cut it before a HOLY God.....

So He has made you (who believe)... holy, blameless and beyond reproach.....before God.... ..

He even calls you **RIGHTEOUS!** (see v. 39a) (and not because you act like it)

Christ did not come to save the **GOOD** people....He came to save sinners....who are **SICK** in their sin..... as they confess that to God... turn from it in their heart.....and TO Christ....

He forgives them and makes them **RIGHTEOUS** in their soul.....

He **SAVES** them,.....then..... by chiseling away.....their sinful ways.....He **BRINGS OUT** that righteousness.... in daily life..

God both allows and sometimes even **BRINGS** difficult situations into your life.... so that he can **bring OUT** the righteousness of Christ He has already deposited in your heart..

- Get that reality that is going on?..... GOD... the master craftsman.....

Is using trials and difficulties....to chisel away your carnal tendencies and sin patterns so that (through faith) the **inner beauty** of JESUS can gradually **be seen**and experienced....

David calls you to **cooperate** with the LORD as He accomplishes this:

Psalm 37:5-6

"Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday."

To **commit** your way to the LORD... is to **ROLL it** over to Him.... to **TRANSFER** control of your daily direction to Him....

He brings about impossible situations in your life.... so that you have very little choice but to cast the burden of what you are dealing with on Him.....

But his **larger** goal.... is not merely to sustain you through the trial (which He **will**)....

But to teach you to **let him drive**... in all your situations...

You have to BELIEVE in His Sovereignty to do that.... other wise you will try to take back the wheel....

I now have two sons with learner's permits..... first few times they drive it is somewhat unnerving..... I keep my hand on that emergency brake.....(not sure if it actually works – but it makes me feel better)..

So tempting... to reach over and take hold of the wheel whenever we come to difficult situation... like a **lane change** in heavy traffic.....

That is **understandable**.... (is it not?) when you are putting your life in the hands of an inexperienced teenager....?

But is it understandable....when we want to take the wheel back from an omniscient... sovereign... **GOD**.... in directing the course of our life?

No... it is called **UNBELIEF**.

The very definition of a Christian is someone who has given JESUS the helm of their ship.... We are trusting Him not only to save our soul.... but to DIRECT each of our steps as we follow His lead....

- How many times a day do you try to reach over and grab the wheel?

Might even be a situation in your life right now.... you are trying to exercise **CONTROL**.... instead of **entrusting** it to God....

Even now..... Transfer the helm back into His capable hands.....

Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him (look at the promise) – He WILL **act!**

Not only does that mean He will accomplish what concerns you in that specific situation.....

That He will answer your prayer to rescue your wayward child..... or to resolve an impossible conflict..... or to provide for you financially.....

But in addition to **ACTING in the situation**.... He promises to act to do this:

Psalm 37:6

"He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday."

It might be a large BLAST removing a stronghold of sin.....(which obscures your righteousness).... or it might be just a gentle chiseling away at some lesser evil.....

But AS YOU trust in a Sovereign God **to ACT**.... He will bring out your righteousness....**through** that situation....

You might not SEE it! But rest assured He is **DOING** IT!

Notice it says "**YOUR** righteousness"you now **own** what has been given you as a gift! It was FREE..... but now it composes the core of who you are!

You **ARE** righteous.... in fact in (v. 18) he calls you **blame-less**.....(through the gospel) and God is bringing it out into full view for all to see!

God, What are you Doing?

2. He is **ORIENTING** you around His Time Frame.

A man I know.... absolutely **refuses** to FLY on commercial airlines.... He is not **scared**...of flying..... in fact he used to own his own private plane....

The reason he will not fly.... is that he refuses to have to **subject himself** to their time schedules...

If he is ready to leave..... he likes to be able to get in the car and go. If he wants to stop.... he doesn't want any pre-set schedule dictating what he can and can not do.

If we are all honest..... given our preferences.... we wish we could live life like that too....

We want to be able to **make things happen**..... **WHEN** we want them to....

We dislike WAITING.... for anything.....

So GOD.... who is bringing out your righteousness as you walk by faith.... wants to teach you... (through your trials)... that **you are on HIS time schedule**... and He wants you to believe.... that it is better than yours.

Psalm 37:7

"Be **still** before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!"

Evil devices... are the MEANS of our trying to make things happen apart from God.

Busyness... one of them..... It is often a cover up for insecurity. If we are anxious about something.... we will occupy ourselves with DOING something... anything....as a means of relieving our stress...

God says...Because I am promising to act....I am promising to come through for you.... I will bring out your righteousness as you trust in me....

- Be **still**. (pause)....

Be **Quiet**. in my presence....

Take note....he isn't talking about **yoga**..... he isn't saying..... numb your mind with emptiness.....

He is saying to **cease striving**..... (and in that mode of Quiet Rest).... reflect on My Promises so that you can **KNOW and believe** that I am God!...

In the presence of the LORD.....be still..... and reflect on the goodness of His POWER.... of His faithfulness.....

Call to mind His promises.... PRAY them back to Him.....

and ask Him for grace to teach (to be **re-oriented**) so that you can patiently **WAIT** upon His timing....

I have shared with many of you.... that most often God will give you an idea... maybe even a vision of something He wants you to do..... and it is **OF HIM**.....

You automatically assume.... that means **IMMEDIATELY!**

If it is Biblical.... and He is affirming it through the wise counsel of the Body..... it very likely is His will....

But the timing of it.... (more often than not) is farther in the future....than we think....

Why is that? 1) God has work to do in teaching us to **wait** on Him.
2) He has work to do in training us to operate on His timing... in His power.

And to know **in the mean time**... that He is still GOD.

Think about people in the Bible..... what was the time difference between the promise to **Abraham** and even its partial fulfillment?

(how much training of Abraham took place in the mean time)?

How about....**Moses** desire to lead Israel out of Egypt and its fulfillment....

How about **Joseph**?

How about the time between when David was anointed King of Israel from when he actually began to reign....

Did David not cry out..... all through these Psalms.... God, **What** are you Doing?

How about the time between Jesus announcing that the KOG was at hand..... and His return to establish it in full measure?

God has not changed.... in the interim between vision and fulfillment He is **at WORK**.

- Just like you **learn** to WAIT for a green light.....

Train yourself to WAITuntil you have confirmation from God....that you it is **now TIME** to act....

The God who controls all circumstances will line up things in your life... and confirm it in your spirit when the time is fulfilled....

Psalm 37:34

"**Wait** for the LORD and keep his way, and he **will** exalt you to inherit the land; you **will** look on when the wicked are cut off."

If your orientation on daily life is going to be adjusted.... you are going to have to take these promises at **face value**....

Temptations to take control... "to seize the moment".... to get while the getting is good.... are too strong... to be fought with something that **MIGHT** happen....

God says you are to WAIT for Him by **keeping His way**... because He WILL exalt you in the proper time... you **will** see the destruction of the wicked.... and you WILL inherit His Kingdom as a joint heir with Jesus Christ...

Those are absolute **certainties**..... if you **BELIEVE**.

Let's be as Biblical as we can here.... to **not believe** (to want to be in control yourself)...is **EVIL**.

To keep on asking (like Israel did)... God What are you Doing with us.... instead of trusting Him to accomplish His work... is the evil of **UNBELIEF**.

Psalm 37:27

"Turn away from evil and **do good**; so shall you dwell forever."

The last truth I would like to apply to us from this Psalm.... is the **MAIN** work God is up to in your life here on earth:

God, What are you Doing?

3. He is Making You Into a Channel of His Blessings

Scripture tells us that God causes His **rain** to fall on both the evil and the good.... His **sun** warms the face of the most wicked terrorist.... just as it does the missionary trying to take them the gospel...

But the wicked are **cut off**.... from the **personal kindnesses** of God which believers experience....

Undeserved Kindnesses such as:

The **comfort** of being able to REST in the surety of God to be faithful to His people.... the wicked do not know....

(Everyone close to them is a **liar**..... and can not be trusted)

they do not recognize....or experience....

The **generosity** of God in pouring out undeserved blessings ...

The **gentleness of Jesus**... who does not extinguish dimly burning candles..... or break bruised reeds..... they know **NOT**...

- God is working those character qualities of Christ OUT in your life.... so that others around **you** can have **ACCESS** to them...

Just like a Wi-Fi hotspot at a public place.... gives you ACCESS to all the information the internet provides...as you come within range of it...

God is likewise making you a PORTAL of God's goodness to the world in which you live....

He is being FAITHFUL to guide and sustain and bless you... so that you (and your offspring) can become a blessing:

Psalm 37:23-26

"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. 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**."

This is a beautiful portrait of God parenting you..... so that you can produce godly offspring in His image....

Like a **father** takes hold of his child's hand.... as he is learning to walk..... So God will let us learn to follow in His footsteps.... periodically **loosening His grip**..... but ready at any instant to catch us....as we stumble....

- You have experienced that.....if you are a believer.....

God has shown you His love by saving you out of evil you stumbled upon.....

Though you might even fall and scrape your knee.....(so that you can learn the consequences of evil.....)

But.... You will **not** fall flat on your face.... because GOD... your Father has a **firm hold** on his son's hand!...

How does that **affect** you? Even as you think about situations you have been through recently.... can you see how God had hold of your hand?

Give Thanks for that.... and then realize **what God is Doing**....

By showing you how unwaveringly He is **FAITHFUL** to you.....

Little by little He is making you faithful to others...

So that by enjoying God's faithfulness to you.... you can become a faithful spouse... a faithful parent..... a faithful employee....

Just as God watches your back..... little by little He is making you into a man (or a woman) that others can likewise **depend upon** to watch their back.....

To **lift them up** when they fall down.....

To bear up under a burden with them.... so they don't have to alone....

To be **REFUGE** for them in time of trouble.....

You become a PORTAL of God's Goodness to others....

And (whether it be physical children or spiritual disciples...or both)...

Your offspring likewise **become a BLESSING**.

- Have you considered that? Some of the sanctifying work God is up to in your life.....may be exclusively so that **YOUR CHILDREN** (the people you disciple) can become a means of grace to their generation?

They will learn to be a conduit of God's blessings as they **see you** doing it....

No more Practical Avenue for this grace to travel on than money. Therefore... few places where the FRUIT of God's grace either shows up....in you (through generosity)....or is still **occluded** by **greed**.

Psalm 37:21

"The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is **generous** and **gives**;"

God wants the world to see the INCARNATION of Jesus.....

He wants them to experience the KINDNESS of His generosity.....

The trustworthiness of His Faithfulness.....

The unchanging character of His Word.....

So.... through suffering.... and trials that teach you to trust Him....

God is forming the IMAGE of His son in your body.....through your life.....

THAT is what God is Doing....

He has given you these promises as a means of grace.... that will enable you to COOPERATE with him in this process...

He gives MORE grace....for you to trust Him.... He will be your personal REFUGE for all the times when you simply **can't understand**.....what He is up to...

Psalm 37:39-40

"**The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold** in the time of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because **they take refuge** in him."

Lord, we want our salvation to be completed..... we long for this good work that you have begun in us to be completed so we can see JESUS.....

We long for your Kingdom to come..... and the full reward of your Son's work be seen by all the world....