

## Trust in the Lord and Do Good (Psalm 37)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (11/7/2021)

### Introduction

1. Psalm 37 is God's commentary on *meekness*. *Meekness* is surrender to God's sovereignty, resisting anger through the control of the Spirit in grace.
2. Psalm 37:11 argues that what now *seems* to be the reality is not.
  - a. As we look around us, it appears that it is the "*wrongdoers who will inherit the earth.*" The natural response to what we see, especially when things are not going the way we think they should, is to lash out in frustration and anger. The Lord reminds, "*The meek shall inherit the land [Heb., 'erets, earth]*" (v. 11). That is a firm promise.
  - b. Jesus quoted verse 11 in the Beatitudes: "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*" (Matthew 5:5). The phrase, "*inherit the earth,*" is found five times (the number of grace) in this psalm (vv. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34).
3. This psalm, then, explains why we must wait with meekness on the Lord and not be exasperated in response to what we have perceived as *inequity* in the world around us.
  - a. Four exhortations are found in this chapter against a response of *anger*: (1) "*fret not* [in the Hithpael, to heat oneself in vexation and be incensed], used three times" (vv. 1, 7, 8); (2) "*do not be envious* [jealous anger—frustrated that we are not in control and enjoying the freedom to do what we want]" (v. 1); "*refrain from anger* [expressing in-your-face anger to others]" (v. 8); (4) "*and forsake wrath* [rage]" (v. 8).
  - b. We are warned against the resentment we naturally feel over the injustice we see around us, and we are given the divine antidote, which is in two parts: "*Trust in the Lord,*" and "*Do good.*"

### I. "Trust In the Lord."

1. What does it mean to *trust*?
  - a. *Trust* is acting with spiritual confidence, feeling safe and secure—*careless*—in the middle of danger that would naturally cause doubt and fear (Numbers 23:10). Note verse 37: "*Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace.*" Peace is completeness, soundness, and a sense of welfare with those who are in a right covenantal relationship with God.
  - b. This trust comes when there is an unwavering commitment to God and His Word (Psalm 119:165).
2. Beware of "trust" that is not trust. Beware of the trust that *wishes* only for a good result. Rest on the word of our God: "*Those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the earth*" (v. 9).
  - a. A false trust betrays itself with *doubts*, doubts about our capacity to stand firm in the trial of tyrants (v. 12). Our God is in complete control. His will is accomplished even when it appears otherwise (v. 7). The wicked tyrants of our day will soon run out of time (vv. 2, 10).
  - b. A faulty trust causes the believer to doubt he is doing the will of God. Instead, "*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*" (vv. 5, 6).

- c. A faulty trust causes the believer to doubt that his God is involved and blessing what he is doing.  
*“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”* (vv. 23, 24).

## II. “Do Good.”

1. What does it mean to “do good”? Jesus declared that only God is good; thus, the only good is what God considers good.
  - a. *Good* is what is agreeable intrinsically, agreeable in itself, and valuable by God’s eternal standards.
  - b. For example the prosperity we wrongly envy in the evildoer is a matter of worldly opinion, not what is divinely good in actuality. Often our frustration results from seeing what we have deemed valuable to us lost due to the tyranny of wrong doers.
2. Doing good is trusting in what God calls prosperity and pursuing it, for it has eternal value.
  - a. For example, this is what Paul experienced in Philippians 3:7 and 8. Note two things: (1) what Paul considered gain formerly was really no gain at all because it had no eternal value; therefore, Paul considered that gain as loss. (2) That loss was necessary for what was truly valuable—Christ as *Lord*; thus, in submission and obedience to Christ as Lord, everything done in obedience to Him was eternal gain.
  - b. Therefore, Paul exhorted believers, *“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities [as ordered by King Jesus], to be obedient [to King Jesus], to be ready for every good work”* (Titus 3:1). When earthly rulers govern according to divine dictates, we are blessed. However, when civil rulers govern by evil dictates (v. 3), our job as representatives of the Kingdom of Heaven is to pursue the welfare of our neighbors in the name of Christ. This will often mean that we resist the state; for this defiance we will suffer persecution. Of course, this behavior is a consequence of salvation, not the cause of it (Titus 3:4–7).

## Conclusion

1. If one’s response to his present circumstances is anger, he must analyze that anger. Is it righteous? *“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil”* (Ephesians 4:26, 27). It is right to be angry when wrongdoers are doing wrong, particularly when they are being rewarded with good.

Is the anger envious of the wrongdoer—that what he has we want or that we are not rewarded as he is?

Is the anger against the Lord? Are we angry with God that He is letting the wrongdoers get away with their wrongdoing? Are we angry that justice is not equal?
2. How much of our lives is spent in pursuit of what we deem good by the standards of the wrongdoer? How zealous are we to do good? How much do we really trust the Lord?