

READ: “¹⁶ A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked. ¹⁷ For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous. ¹⁸ The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever. ¹⁹ They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

²⁰ 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. ²¹ ¶ The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. ²² For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off.

²³ The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. ²⁴ Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand. ²⁵ I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

²⁶ *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed *is* blessed. ²⁷ Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. ²⁸ For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. ²⁹ The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.” (Ps 37:16-29)

The eye of faith sees that which cannot be seen by the eye of the flesh. They are seen in Scripture, and faith, which is by the Word of God, lays holds on them. These are real things, but belong to the world of the mind and Spirit.

The natural man can never see them, because he has no eyes for them. 1Co 2:14 “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

There are invisible things revealed in this great 37th Psalm, and we are called to see and to believe them. The Holy Spirit tells us that we are enabled by faith to “look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2Corinthians 4:18. In this passage Paul is talking about the same things that the Psalmist is writing about. Look at 2Cor 4, beginning with verse 7.

[Note to me] READ THIS PASSAGE.

I touched on some of these things last week, but I want to unpack them some more this morning. There are three very blessed invisible things that I would consider this morning. The blessed of the Lord are contrasted with those that are cursed of him, from verse 22; my remarks are from verses 23-29. These three invisible things are possessed by those blessed of the Lord:

1. The blessed have an INVISIBLE DIRECTION.
2. The blessed have an INVISIBLE PROTECTION.
3. The blessed have an INVISIBLE DISPENSATION.

I. An INVISIBLE DIRECTION. “The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.”

A. This direction is NOT:

1. By chance: you don’t live by the roll of the dice. Pr 16:33 “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.” Hence, you and I are not to tempt the Lord, to put Him to the test.
2. By others: God will permit you to be deceived by others, if you take your counsel and direction from them. Now God gives you and me counselors, and we are to listen to wise counselors and good advice, but we are not to be directed by them, knowing that at best they will speak the words of God to us, and at worse they will speak for their own advantage and agenda. Hence, we are to weigh and consider, pray and seek the Lord.
3. By yourself; Trust in the Lord; lean not to thine own understanding. Of course we are to seek counsel, and reach out in our minds to the Lord; There is a great promise in Proverbs 16:2,3: “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.” We use logic and reason and intuition, but we do not trust in them or anything of this earth, but call out to our God.

B. What this direction IS: See Matthew 4:1-4. READ. What proceeds from the mouth of God has two aspects to it:

1. His precepts. He has commanded us to follow what He has revealed to us: The Ten Commandments and their unpacking which is in the rest of Scripture. He has made known unto us what His will is. But I do

not believe that this is the specific meaning of this verse in Matthew, because there is nothing in the law that forbids us to turn stones into bread. Of course, we cannot do that, but Jesus, the Son of Man, could do that.

2. His decrees. This is where faith comes in, for we do not know usually what His decrees are.
 - a. Jesus is quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3: “And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.” Israel must trust God for provisions in the wilderness; the manna was for that purpose, to teach them that His decree would take care of them.
 - b. The decrees are hidden from us and they are unchanging, even if we do not keep the precepts, for even our sins cannot change the purposes of God. As we read in Ps 76:10: “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” “restrain” gird: active or passive, the meaning is the same. If God puts a belt on the remainder of wrath, then He restrains it. If He puts the wrath on as a belt, then He uses men’s wrath for His own purposes, so the meaning is the same. God uses the wrath of man; the wrath of man does not use God.
 - c. Adam’s sin did not turn aside the purpose God had for man; nor Isaac’s, nor David’s, nor Israel’s.
 - d. There is much more could be said, but I spare you.

II. An INVISIBLE PROTECTION. “Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand.”

- A. The direction of the Lord is an extensive training in discipleship. This is the purpose of the direction, the hidden directing of God that the ungodly cannot see or understand.
- B. This direction sometimes means allowing us to fall, to teach us how frail we are.
 1. Jesus said to Peter, “Satan hath desired to have thee to sift you; but I have prayed for you...” How blessed are the prayers of Christ. Peter fell, but he was not utterly cast down, for God upheld him with his hand.
 2. David also spoke of this: Ps 119:67 “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”
 3. It was also said of King Hezekiah: 2Ch 32:31 “Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.”
 4. We are not to be presumptuous, to think that we can walk without God: 1Co 10:12 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
- C. “Hand” here means the Holy Spirit: Ezekiel 37:1; 8:3 The Holy Spirit is the extension of the power of God in creating, preserving, and directing the affairs of the world. Hence, He is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, for He not only performs the Word of God in creation and preservation and providence, but He also works regeneration and sanctification in the elect, as our Comforter that our Lord promised when He returned to heaven.
- D. So you see: the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son preserves us according to the will of God: See John 10:26-30: “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” (Joh 10:26-30) Our salvation is the work of every person of the Holy Trinity.
- E. In answer to the question of unbelief: shall we then sin that grace may abound, Paul summarizes his answer in Romans 8:
 1. First of all he says: 8, 9 “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”
 2. Then he says: 14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”
 3. Though our training may be rigorous, we are sustained in it and overcome by the power of the Spirit through faith, for faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

III. Finally, an INVISIBLE DISPENSATION: The blessed inherit the earth.

- A. Jesus spoke of this, and you know this: Matthew 6:31-33: “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
- B. The wise man in Ecclesiastes also spoke of this, but more obscurely: Ecclesiastes 9:5-10 “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of

them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

- C. The only people who can really enjoy this earth are those who know what it is: a temporary journey and stopping place, for the testing of faith, on our way to our heavenly inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us: 1Peter 1:4, 5 "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." So we have come full circle from the beginning of this sermon.

Application:

1. Let us lay up treasures in heaven where our inheritance is.
2. Let us remember the words of Christ, that He will come to take us to where He is now, that where He is we may be also.
3. Let us seek diligently the kingdom of God. How precious is the church and the people of God. "Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven." That we will willingly and joyfully seek the precept of God. We do not need to worry about His decrees, which are hidden in Him until the times appointed; but His precepts are very clear and we are to walk in them.
4. Let us pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit that the work that is begun in us will continue and mature. Let us not quench Him; let us not resist Him; let us not grieve Him. Why is such prayer necessary? because it is according the precept of Christ, that He will not dispense His gifts except to those who pray and earnestly beseech Him for them. HC 116.

God bless you all. Amen and Amen.