

“Wise Counsel From an Aged Man”
Psalm 37 – Part III
(Preached at Trinity, August 22, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We’ve spent the last couple weeks looking at this psalm of wisdom. David presents the way of the ungodly and the way of the Godly and encourages his readers not to become discouraged at the apparent prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous.
 2. Sometimes it would seem that the ungodly are excelling in this world while the righteous are suffering. But we don’t always see through the eyes of God. It is easy for us to have tunnel vision and not see the whole picture – that God is accomplishing His perfect plan.
 3. This psalm was written by David in his old age and thus reflects a lifetime of experience and wisdom. It reads like a chapter in the Book of Proverbs. Each verse is full of wisdom giving instruction to God’s people.
 4. As I stated at the beginning, although it is difficult to divide this psalm into sections we do find five loosely connected sections that contain some dominate themes.
 - Verses 1-11** – David comforts God’s people as they face the afflictions of life
 - Verses 12-15** – David considers the way of the wicked
 - Verses 16-24** – David contrasts the way of the wicked and way of the righteous
 - Verses 25-33** – David counsels God’s people as an aged man of wisdom
 - Verses 34-40** – David concludes by setting before us the big picture
 5. So far we’ve looked at the first three. David has described for us the great contrast between the righteous and the wicked.
 6. David is advanced in years in this psalm. He is writing from years of experience. Tonight we’ll engage our minds as we hear wise counsel from this aged saint.
- I. **Verses 25-33** – David counsels God’s people as an aged man of wisdom
Psalm 37:25 – “I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”
- A. The Bible presents to us the aged as those to honor and respect because of their years of experience.
 1. This was part of the Levitical law
NASB **Leviticus 19:32** – “You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.”
KJV – the hoary head
 - a. The instruction is to stand in honor when they enter the room
 - b. Those who are wise are worthy of double honor – their counsel should be sought and their wisdom appreciated.
 - c. We’ve lost this in our generation. We put the aged into nursing homes so they can be forgotten.

- d. The young would be prudent to be silent and seek the wisdom of those older than they.
Job 32:6-7 – “So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said, "I am young in years and you are old; Therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think. ⁷ "I thought age should speak, And increased years should teach wisdom.”
 2. At the time of the early church great value was placed upon the wisdom of age.
 - a. When Paul told Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth” he was probably around 40 years old.
 - b. There is an unhealthy intoxication with youth today. Many churches think they need young pastor in his 20’s so he can add energy to the church. Many will not call a man in his 60’s. Theologically this is when he is in his prime!
 3. The Apostle Paul had frequent commands concerning our duty to the aged.
 - a. They must be treated with respect
1 Timothy 5:1-2 – “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.”
 - b. They must be provided for in old age
1 Timothy 5:4 – “if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.”
 - c. They should be looked to for wisdom and guidance. Paul spoke of the older women guiding the younger.
Titus 2:3-5 – “The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; ⁴ That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”
 4. David is saying here that he is speaking from experience – from a lifetime of observation.
- B. What has he observed?
1. The righteous are never forsaken – **Verse 25**
 He adds nor will his children have to beg for bread
 - a. How can this be? Are Christians never in poverty? Yes, and no. First, we can apply this spiritually. Believers are never forsaken by God. He feeds us with the bread of life. In Christ we are content and joyous in every condition. But we don’t need to spiritualize this.
 - b. God’s people fall into economic hardship like others upon this earth.
 God gave strict instructions for the care of the poor under the Old Covenant.
 Under the New Covenant Christians always unite with the community of the righteous.

- c. The righteous provide for their own.
The early church demonstrated this
Acts 2:44-45 – “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; ⁴⁵ And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.”
- d. Notice carefully that David says he’s never seen the “righteous” forsaken. He isn’t talking about the merely religious.
The church has a duty to provide for its own – but only the righteous. Listen to Paul:
1 Timothy 5:3 – “Honour widows that are widows indeed.”
1 Timothy 5:5 – “Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.”
1 Timothy 5:9-10 – “Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, ¹⁰ Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints’ feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.”
- e. The righteous always take care of their own.
The righteous always surrounds himself with the community of faith.
- f. It is difficult to take this verse, however, as a universal maxim.
David himself begged bread from Abimelech.
There have been times of universal famine that has brought great hardship among even Christians. It is true that we are never forsaken.
2 Corinthians 4:8-9 – “*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;*”
2. There is one more way to apply **Verse 25**. No one has ever been brought to poverty through his generosity. You can’t out-give God.
This is what David is saying in **Verse 26**
Psalms 37:26 – “*He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*”
^{NASB} **Proverbs 19:17** – “He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed.”
3. **Verse 28** – still with a mind towards the righteous David states that God loves justice. He will never forsake His righteous ones.
- a. In contrast with the wicked – their descendents shall be cut off
- b. Again, David is making personal observation.
The children of the righteous enjoy the benefits of righteous parents
The children of the wicked suffer the curse of having wicked parents.
A wicked parent allows his children to follow the wickedness of their hearts and thus continuing in their condemnation.

Exodus 34:7 – “Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.”

3. **Verses 30-31** – David had spent a lifetime observing the lives of the righteous.
 - a. Their mouths speak from hearts of wisdom, hearts guided by the Word of God – Divine wisdom. (Pat used to have to correct a lady at the Trinity ladies study who continually gave worldly wisdom)
 - b. The Law of God is in his heart and so his steps are directed according to righteousness.

Psalms 119:10-12 – “With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. ¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. ¹² Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.”

4. **Verses 32-33** – Although the wicked may often seek to overthrow the righteous God will not abandon His own. He will not leave him in the hand of the wicked or join in their condemnation. Righteous Joseph stands forever to encourage us. Although falsely accused and imprisoned God raised him up in due time.
Remember the big picture.

V. **Verses 34-40** – David concludes by setting before us the big picture

A. “Wait on the LORD” “Keep His way.”

Isaiah 30:18 – “. . . blessed *are* all they that wait for him.”

1. God will exalt you in due time
1 Peter 5:6 – “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:
“In due time” = in His time
2. Joseph was in prison for two years.
3. Waiting demands patience. This is one of God’s purposes for our trials
James 1:2-4 – “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”
Remember the big picture.
4. Waiting upon God demands courage
Psalms 27:14 – “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”
5. The wicked may seem great in power spreading out his power like the branches of a mighty tree but his doom is sure
6. David states by experience that the wicked will ultimately be brought down.
Psalms 37:36 – “Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.”

- B. The righteous man will be at peace
Psalm 37:37 – “Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that man is peace*.”
1. The wicked man shall know no peace
Isaiah 57:20-21 – “But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. ²¹ *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*”
 2. In the end God will always help and deliver the righteous who trust in Him.
Psalm 37:39-40 – “*he is* their strength in the time of trouble. ⁴⁰ And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.”

Conclusion:

1. This is the big picture. It may seem for a moment that there is success and prosperity for the wicked. They may have more power, more money and possessions. They may speak boldly of their accomplishments. They may establish powerful kingdoms around themselves. But they *will* be brought down.
This is the big picture.
2. Don't be guilty of being distracted by the moment. Don't be fooled into looking only at your present circumstance. We will be victors in the end.
Woodrow Wilson – “I would rather temporarily fail in a cause that will ultimately succeed than temporarily succeed in a cause that will ultimately fail.”
3. Don't let temporary setbacks and struggles take your eye off the big picture.
David says, *Trust in the Lord, Delight yourself in Him, Commit yourself to Him.*
Keep your eye on the big picture.