

River Community Church

Daily Devotionals Sept 25 - Sept 30 2016

Knowing and Loving God and Making God's
Love Known to Others

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Day 1 Psalm 37 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 37:1-11

“1 Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; 2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. 3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. 4 Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him and He will do this: 6 He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun. 7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. 8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. 9 For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. 10 A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. 11 But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity.” (NIV)

Understand:

Psalm 37 comes from David. David probably wrote this Psalm late in his life. You can see David reflecting back over the years of his life. Despite the injustice that he has experienced and witnessed, he knows God is faithful. In this Psalm, he turns his attention to the people and addresses them directly. This Psalm is one of the most direct statements of God's justice.

David shares with the people not to be disturbed over the injustice they see, because divine justice will still be granted. He encourages the righteous to trust in the Lord continually and not become angry, because ultimately God will pour out His justice.

David says two times not to fret. To fret means “to become angry and worry”. To fret is a very destructive emotion; it turns our focus from God to ourselves. When we lay awake at night tossing and turning because of the evildoers we see, we fret. We lay there thinking of all the things we can do or should have done to make it right! All the while, we're letting it eat us up from the inside. David's word to us is...Stop!

He reminds us that these evildoers are nothing. They are a flash in the pan; they will vanish like the grass that withers.

Instead, David calls us to: trust in the Lord, find our delight in Him, commit our ways to the Lord, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.

David is calling us to have a deep, abiding reliance on the God who has promised to punish the ungodly and to reward the righteous. David wants us to remember that God's Word can never fail.

Sometimes remembering this truth is the hardest thing for us to do, but we must remember... "The battle is not ours, but God's."

Apply:

For us today the battle is fought by looking to Jesus, who makes all things right! His Kingdom has come and is moving forward against all injustice and will one day be complete as He reigns in the new creation!

This is what we put our hope in; this hope is the Gospel!

Think about what angers you; the injustice that keeps you up at night. Maybe someone has wronged you or maybe you've been treated unfairly; it might even seem as though the people involved have gotten away with it.

When you feel anger taking a hold of you, refuse to fret yourself, don't allow yourself to burn with anger

Instead talk to God, say something like, "Jesus talk to me...tell my soul you are my salvation... soul, listen to me...Jesus is your hope...hope in him."

Remember who is sovereign over your life and who isn't. Those people who have wronged you or brought injustice into the world will soon be gone; they are like grass.

As followers of Christ we must remain in Him, remember He is our fixed point of reference. Without Him we can do nothing.

Question: Are you angry at what you see going around you and are trying to take matters into your own hands? If you are, just remember that it only works well in the very short-term, even feels good...but never works in the longer-term...always leads to a loss of freedom, less of a harvest.

Would you give your anger to Jesus? Tell Him about your hurts and your pain.

Trust Him. Delight in Him. Commit your ways to Him

Live:

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

Day 2 Psalm 37 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 37:12-17

“12 The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them; 13 but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for He knows their day is coming. 14 The wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright. 15 But their swords will pierce their own hearts, and their bows will be broken. 16 Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; 17 for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous.”

Understand:

Have you ever had a dog come rushing at you with its hair standing up on its back, jaws snapping, barking and growling? It's a pretty frightening experience. That's the picture that David is trying to paint for us. The wicked that plot against the righteous are like a wild beast gnashing its teeth...waiting to seize and devour the Just.

It may be intimidating to us, but not to God. The Lord doesn't act immediately, but instead He laughs. That's right, the Lord laughs at all their bravado and scheming because “He knows their day is coming”. Their activities are futile. We can take comfort in this, because it is the Lord who sees the end from the beginning; He's the one that has assured us that His judgement against the wicked is coming. In fact, their attacks on the poor and needy (the righteous) are going to backfire on them and their own violence will end up destroying them. Their strength (their swords and bows) will be broken.

Apply:

Contrast their fate with the righteous; it's different as night and day. The righteous will be upheld by the Lord's immeasurable power!

Look at the Lord's response to the wicked. He is sovereign and all-powerful. He is all-knowing. Your life situation, the current struggle you find yourself in, has not caught Him off guard. He has promised to “never leave you or forsake you.” That's why we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” (Heb. 13:5-6)

We, the righteous, have no reason to fear the wicked or to feel like we have to bring about justice on our own. We can give it to the Father and trust that He will bring about His judgment.

God is our living hope and our hope is based on Jesus! HE is the one who was raised from the dead, the one who has given us new life and everything to live for. The cool thing is...it starts now! We can have confidence regardless the circumstance, because God is keeping careful watch over us. (1 Pet. 1:3-5)

“31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?... 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:31; 37-39)

Reflect for just a moment on your life; ask the Holy Spirit to give you a right perspective.

All of us, believer and nonbeliever, are like smoke and dust; our lives are like a vapor.

In reality there is not much that we can control.

But that's not the end of the story. Jesus makes all the difference. So we remember that because of Christ...the wicked, like ourselves, do not have to experience God's justice.

Take a moment and reflect on the Lord's love for you. Think about His kindness and mercy toward you. Remember that he is for you, and not against you.

Offer your praise to Him... Because it is the LORD who upholds the righteous!

Live:

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**



Day 3 Psalm 37 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 37: 18-26

“18 The blameless spend their days under the LORD’s care, and their inheritance will endure forever. 19 In times of disaster they will not wither; in days of famine they will enjoy plenty. 20 But the wicked will perish: Though the LORD’s enemies are like the flowers of the field, they will be consumed, they will go up in smoke. 21 The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously; 22 those the LORD blesses will inherit the land, but those he curses will be destroyed. 23 The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; 24 though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. 25 I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. 26 They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be a blessing.”

Understand:

We can rest assured that the Lord is keeping track of us, His eye is forever on us. We can know with confidence that He will give us what we need, for we know that we have an eternal inheritance. But this is not the case with those who have rejected Him. David reiterates their fate to us again. One day they will seem to have it made, their life as beautiful as a field of flowers, and then the next day they're mowed down and left smoldering.

Remember that David writes this Psalm when he was an old man, and he wants to drive the point home to us that he has “never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging for bread.” Oh, they may stumble along the way, but they will never be forsaken! The Lord holds the believer securely in His hand.

Apply:

Maybe you've stumbled in the past week. Maybe anger has gotten a hold of your heart and you've lashed out at someone.

Would you be still and wait on the Lord, would you let Him pull you back up on your feet?

If you need to repent, then repent right now and move on. Don't dwell in the past. Your sins have been forgiven. Remember that you have an eternal inheritance that has been secured in Christ. He died to set you free from sin. (Heb. 9:15) “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

Now remember... remember and thank God for all that He's done for you!

Take a moment and ask Him to help you to be faithful to what He has called you to do today and know that He will be right beside you with His hand upon you.

Now wait, be still and be quiet; and let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. (Col. 3:15)

Live:

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

Day 4 Psalm 37 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 37:34-38

“34 Hope in the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it. 35 I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a luxuriant native tree, 36 but he soon passed away and was no more; though I looked for him, he could not be found. 37 Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace. 38 But all sinners will be destroyed; there will be no future for the wicked.”

Understand:

Hope: To eagerly wait; expect; to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial, often with a focus of anticipation in a future event.

David is once again encouraging us to set our hope and expectations on the Lord. The injustice we see almost on a daily basis can lead us to think it is hopeless. David wants to reassure us that this kind of thinking is just not the case. For the third time, David reiterates the futility of the wicked. To drive the point home he uses the example of a thriving tree that in the end passes away, and in the space it occupied, one could never tell that there had been such a flourishing tree. It is completely gone and remembered no more.

David really wants us to see that the only hope we have is a life lived for God. We're here for a season and then we're gone. The only hope we have is to be found in the Lord. That hope is found in Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1-5 (NIrV)

“We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Through faith in Jesus we have received God's grace. In that grace we stand. We are full of joy because we expect to share in God's glory. 3And that's not all. We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. 4The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. 5And hope will never let us down. God has poured his love into our hearts. He did it through the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to us.”

This HOPE will not disappoint! In fact, it gives us confidence because we know that He who began such a great work in our life will see it through to completion. (Phil. 1:6)

Apply:

So if all of this is true... can you trust Christ despite the injustice you see or may have experienced personally? Can you let go of your own wrath, and trust that God has the situation under control?

What would it take for you to wait and be still before the Lord? Can you trust Him enough not to be foolish?

Live:

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

Day 5 Psalm 37 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 37:39-40

“39 The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD; he is their stronghold in time of trouble. 40 The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.”

Understand:

The greatest thing that could ever happen to the righteous is their relationship with God.

Safety, protection, strength, help and deliverance are found in Him alone.

David wants us to turn and take our refuge in God.

Throughout this Psalm David has instructed us how to respond when facing evil in the world. David has told us we're not to lash out against evil in our own fury, but instead the wise are to respond in the following ways: hope in the Lord; strive for loyal obedience to God; and finally, have faith in God's justice.

Apply:

Think of all that has been done for you, all the benefits you have because of Christ's love for you. Now delight yourself in the Lord! Turn your attention to Jesus!

Whatever is troubling you right now, would you give it Him? When has holding on to your troubles ever gotten you what you really wanted?

Delight yourself in Him...and you will get all that you desire...Him.

Remember our hope—hope in the Lord—will never let us down!

Live:

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its

implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

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