

SummerInThePsalms #7 – Fret Not!

Psalm 37:1-10, 23-26, 39-40

As we continue Summer In The Psalms, remember:

- The Psalms, Heaven's Playlist, were not primarily a revelation of truth, but an invitation to experience that truth with the God
- The Psalms were meant to be read, sung, pondered, even memorized. In fact, it is suggested that our Psalm today, Psalm 37, was written as an Acrostic Psalm –sections beginning with each of the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet – **to make it easier to remember.**

Facts and feelings merge once again as the Psalmist addresses an almost universal struggle.

David certainly knew the ups and downs of life.

- He had fought and felled giants, and some of his personal giants felled him.
- He had seen heights of glory and joy, as well as the darkest depths of despair.

An older man now (vs. 25), David muses about one of life's greatest struggles, and through his music, leads us to an answer for our soul.

- He begins, "**Fret not.**" Vs. 1
- Again, in verse 7, he commands, "**fret not**".
- And then a third time, in verse 8, he repeats, "**fret not!**"

This is a message we are not to miss: "Fret not!"

"Fret" is a word most of us don't use often.

- It is **similar to worry, anxiety, fear, even anger...** And yet it is unique.
- In our text, in its root form, the ancient word meant, "**a burning sensation in throat, etc., from rage and pain**"
- It basically means "**to be kindled**", "**to cause to burn**"; "**to heat oneself in vexation**"

Do you ever fret?

Do you ever find your focus drawn to something that just captures you?

Draws you in heart, soul and mind... and lights a fire that grips you?
Makes you forget everything else?
Won't let you go? Defines your life in that moment?

Fretting is a tough, harsh, relentless master. It is no respecter of persons, age, or circumstance. It can silently attack in the middle of the night... or even in the midst of worship.

David knew. So probably do you.
So, he wrote of **God's gameplan for this satanic scheme: "Fret Not..."**

I. The Troubles

We are not going into depth though there is certainly much here.
Though our giants may look different than David's, the struggle is the same—
unfairness, injustice, and the temptation to let those things define us.

We will note some of David's struggles in just a moment, but first, understand

A. The nature of the struggle.

Throughout the Psalm, **the crisis of faith that produced fretting resulted from a casualty in focus.**

Personal Illustration: (Maybe)

This past Friday, while not a *real* life-threatening day, was annoying. My vehicle was back in the shop. Of course that meant hassle. Probably more money. They told me there's a good chance that they're gonna have to replace the engine in a few weeks. More hassle. Now-realize, most of it will be covered. It's not a big deal, right? I should actually be thanking the Lord, right?

Then, on the way out, I get a call from the insurance adjuster. Back on our tornado night a few weeks ago, my vehicle was being worked on and was sitting in the dealership lot. Hail did a number on it. The guy was calling to give me the update. Starting at \$12-13,000... Could be more. If much more they might have to total the vehicle... Again, I

have insurance. No big deal, right? No real issues like so many were facing. Not health. Life or death...

But the satanic imps were whispering. I was irritated. Mumbling to myself. Not happy.

I actually said, "Lord, I know you said to rejoice, and that you work all things together for good... but this..."

And then, almost instantly, like maybe a little angel leaned over and whispered to me, "What is it you're preaching this coming Sunday?"

"Uh... Fret not?"

Instantly, I knew.

I was fretting over what didn't even qualify as a real problem. And the Spirit gently reminded me: You're about to preach on this, remember?

How much more deadly is it with genuine challenges? Loss? Pain? Crushing disappointment?

A crisis of faith often results from a casualty of focus. When we turn our hearts from the One who never lets us down, to circumstances which do, we can find ourselves stuck on the downward spiral of fretting.

The **prophet Jeremiah** observed during the difficult days of the fall of Jerusalem, "***Mine eye affected my heart.***" It does.

Understanding the nature of the battle, consider...

B. The names of some of David's giants.

Vs. 1 – Evil doers, workers of iniquity

Vs. 7 – The person who prospers through wickedness

Vs. 9 – Evil doers

Vs. 12- The wicked who plot against good people and chew them up

Vs. 14 – The wicked who attack and stomp on good people, poor people, people who can't defend themselves

Vs. 21 – The wicked who take (borrow) from those who don't have it and never intend to pay it back

Vs. 32 – The wicked watch children of God and seek to Slay them

One more – Implied - Vs. 24 – The inevitable falls through life...

We're going to fall. Fail. What then?

Life isn't fair.

"They" don't play fair.

The lie we often believe is that doing right means losing—***and letting them win.***

- It didn't sit well with David.
- It doesn't with us either.

What is your giant this morning.

What captivates your thoughts and ruins your peace?

What causes you to grind your teeth and get all worked up on the inside in spite of all the reasons not to?

What just leaves you... irritated. Mad. Fuming. Vexed.... Fretting?

II. The Testimony.

Twice, David injects himself into the song!

This isn't theology from a textbook. It's truth from a battle-worn heart. David isn't guessing—he's remembering

A. Vs.25-26 – God has always been faithful!

Just like **the children of Israel walked out every morning but Sabbath**, for forty years, and **found bread from heaven – manna** – whether they had been good or not,

David looked back over his life. Good and bad. And testified of the unfailing faithfulness of His God! Of His LORD. Of His Savior.

B. Vs. 35-36 – God is always righteous. Fair.

No one gets away with anything. Ever!

David- “Over my life, over time, I’ve seen glimpses of the righteousness of God... of the inevitable law of the harvest.

The wicked flourish fast—but fade even faster

III. Truths.

David doesn’t just tell us what not to do—he gives us a roadmap for what to do when fretting creeps in

A. The truth of time - Two futures!

1. The future of the wicked:

- Our view is **limited**: We can only see a little, and it is often distorted
- What we “see” creates a **false reality**. It is not what it seems.
- **The present is passing.**
- **There is an inevitable future consequence of today’s choices.**
 - Vs. 2 – cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb
 - Vs. 9- “cut off”
 - Vs. 10- “*shall not be*” Vs. 36 – “*he passed away... he was not*”
 - Vs. 13 – The LORD shall laugh at him”
 - Vs. 15 – “Their sword shall enter into their own heart”
 - Vs. 17 – “the arms of the wicked shall be broken” – Their ability to do evil will be taken away
 - Vs. 20 – “the wicked shall perish”

2. The future of those who know the LORD.

- He is with us every moment.
- He is weaving a tapestry of wonder.
 - Our tomorrows are filled with promise and hope.
 - Our future is forever!

B. Truths Of Triumph.

What do we do when we are drawn away and fretting sets in?

1. Trust in the LORD.

It begins there and ends there – cf. vs. 40

a. Trust Him to save you!

What distinguishes...

- *The righteous from the unrighteous?*
- *The upright from the wicked?*
- *A “good man” from the evil?*
- *The “perfect man” (vs. 37) from the transgressor?*

New Testament:

“There is none good, no, not one. “

“For all have sinned and come short...”

The answer:

“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, ***even to them that believe on His name.***” John 1:12

“For ***by grace are ye saved through faith...***” Ephesians 2:8-9

Paul to Timothy- ***“we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”*** 1 Timothy 4:10

David – most in Scripture- “Trust in the LORD...”

Vs. 26 – ***“His seed is blessed!”***

b. Trust the One Who saved you!

2. vs. 3 – “Do good”

Faith produces works, action. James- “Faith without works is dead”

To break the pull of distraction, “do good”!

Cf. vs. 23-24 - Steps!

- Ordered by the Lord.

- Not all known, but He is there to help us take the next one!
Baby steps!
- God delights in our steps!
- What happens when we fall?
We will. Not finally or fatally. Not “utterly cast down”
LORD upholds us in His hand! Cf. John 10:28-30

3. vs. 4- “Delight in the LORD!

When our delight is in Him, the deepest desires of our heart will be satisfied.

Nothing can stop it or diminish it or take it away!

4. Vs. 5 – “Commit thy way... trust”.

Solomon – Proverbs 3:5-7

To know Him is to love Him.

To love Him is to trust Him.

To trust Him is to obey Him.

To obey Him is to be blessed!

5. Vs. 7 – “Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently...”

What do we do when fretting starts to pull us under?

- Trust in the Lord
- Do good
- Delight in the Lord
- Commit your way
- Rest and wait patiently

“And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them... because they trust in Him.”

We can’t control the circumstances we will face in life. We can, by grace of God, choose how we respond.

Fretting feeds fear. Anger. Bitterness. Seeds of destruction.

But trusting fuels peace.

When you find yourself burning on the inside, look again to the One who holds your future and guides your steps.

Fret not. Trust deep. Rest well.