

Scripture Reading: Psalm 37:23-31

Opening Statement:

I want to bring you a message that will hopefully encourage us as we are well on our way into this New Year.

Subject: “*The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly!*”

Key Verses = V. 23-24

In other words, *moving through life with all its challenges---the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly!*

My mind was drawn to these words of David in **Psalm 37**.

I have found myself using them many times to encourage several people who were going through *hard* times, and I thought that the truth in this text would help all of us.

[Illus] “*battles & blessings!*” Nicky Gumbel shares the following story...

“I have never forgotten a talk I heard over thirty years ago. The speaker started by saying that the Christian life is ‘*battle and blessing, battle and blessing, battle and blessing, battle and blessing, battle and blessing... battle and blessing...*’

At the time I thought, ‘*Why is he going on like this? Will it never end?*’ But he was making a memorable and profound point. When we are in the battle it is hard to believe that it will

ever come to an end. When we are in a period of blessing, we sometimes expect it will go on forever. But life is not like that. There are *battles* *and* *blessings*.

Pastor Rick Warren says that he used to think that the Christian life was a succession of *battles and blessings*, whereas now he thinks of life as being on two tracks. At any given moment in life there are usually *blessings*, but also *battles* to face.

He gives the example of the huge blessing that came to him through the publication of **The Purpose Driven Life**, which became the fastest-selling Christian book of all time. It gave him enormous influence. But at the same time, he found out that his wife, Kay, had cancer. On one track of his life there was great *blessing*; on the other track there was a massive *battle* to face.”

[Illus] Proverbs 1:5...

Proverbs 1:5 (KJV)

⁵ A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Proverbs 1:5 (AMP)

⁵ The wise also will hear and increase in learning, and the person of understanding will acquire skill *and* attain to sound counsel [*so that he may be able to steer his course rightly*]—

The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to enable you ‘to steer your course rightly’ (v.5, AMP). Wisdom is the ‘art of steering’ through the *battles and blessings* of life and living skillfully in whatever conditions you find yourself.

‘Wisdom,’ as one Bible teacher says, ‘*is choosing to do now what you will be happy with later on*’

- Now, back to our passage...

One word in our text stands out particularly in my mind. It’s the word “*though*” that stands at the beginning of **verse 24**: “*Though he fall.*”

Some translations say, “*When he falls.*”

Note that it does not say, “*If he falls.*”

There is a big difference between “when” and “if.”

The latter states a *probability*; the former declares a *certainty*.

David understood that all believers fall eventually.

We stumble, we lose our way, we struggle, and sometimes we trip and fall on our journey.

No one is exempt. We all fall sooner or later.

It’s what happens when we fall that makes all the difference.

Background observation:

THE OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER: In subject matter, this psalm of David is about Divine *perspective* concerning *good* and *evil*.

This psalm gives the right *perspective* of life especially when the wicked are prospering and the righteous are not.

Looking at life on the earth without God's *perspective* can produce much frustration and unbelief.

Speaking about “*perspective*,” we need to see things about our life through the lens of God!

Let’s look: Notice a few things with me about “*A Good Man/Woman*”

[Illus] I am going to break a “rule” for public speaking...5 things only.... but our text has more than 5 major things...

- I. **His providence.** “*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD*” (**Psalm 37:23**).

Many truths are in this statement.

One of them is providence. God establishes (“*ordered*”) the way of the righteous.

Divine providence blesses their way.

- II. **His praise.** “*He delighteth in his way*” (**Psalm 37:23**).

God will delight in the way of the righteous, for the righteous are walking in His way, the way that He has ordered.

Some believe "he" of this text refers to the righteous; That the righteous delight in God's way.

That is also true, and if that is the meaning of the text, then it is one of the causes for the blessings we receive.

- III. **His protection.** "He shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand" ([Psalm 37:24](#)).

Divine protection will keep us from being "utterly cast down."

We may go down, but we will not go down for the ten-count.

He will protect us from total defeat.

- IV. **His provisions.** "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" ([Psalm 37:25](#)).

This is a great testimony that says God does not forsake His own.

He provides adequate provisions for those who live righteously.

- V. **His partner.** "The LORD... forsaketh not his saints" ([Psalm 37:28](#)).

God's presence is promised to be perpetual for the saints.

Many in our society would be uncomfortable with this blessing, but they are not "saints"/righteous.

- VI. **His preservation.** "They are preserved forever" ([Psalm 37:28](#)).

The security of the believer is emphasized here. God does not lose those He has saved.

- VII. **His persistency.** "None of his steps shall slide" ([Psalm 37:31](#)).

The righteous will be faithful. He will be loyal.

He will not depart from the right way.

The reason is stated at the beginning of the text ("The law of his God is in his heart") which we noted a bit earlier.

Conclusion: Three Simple Statements

Let's sum up the application of this message with three simple statements:

- 1) Your *struggles* are **necessary** – **fight on!**
- 2) Your *Father* has not **forgotten** you – **hang on!**
- 3) Your *future* is **assured** – **walk on!**

Here are three good mottoes for life: Fight on! Hang on! Walk on!

Closing:

I close with this thought. God will not put you in an unbearable situation in life.

But he may put you in a situation that seems unbearable so that you will turn to Him.

Remember that God does not give his strength in advance but only when needed.

Each day this year you will have what you need.

We may therefore go forth in life with confidence, hope, and joy.

And in the end, we come back to the Lord Jesus and back to the cross.

Let me end this sermon with the words I have said many times before:

If you are tired of your sin, run to the cross.

If you want a new start in life, run to the cross.

If you feel like a failure, run to the cross.

If you fear the future, run to the cross.

If you need hope and encouragement, run to the cross.

Invitation Hymn: Hymn “*No not One*”