

GOD'S RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS

Psalm 37:1-7

Most people want security, freedom and peace. These are vital needs in life. There is something in this Psalm which ministers to these needs of the soul.

David was personally confronted with and troubled by the problem of the prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous. He observed the wicked as they prospered and likewise noted how the saints of God often suffered. He wondered why God dealt thus with the saints and the sinners. This problem not only caused David to wonder, but it has troubled many of God's people through the years that have passed. Doubtless, most of us have wondered why it is that the wicked seemingly prosper while the righteous suffer. By inspiration David answered this question and reminded us that the prosperity of the wicked is only for a season. "For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." From the Bible and from observation we have learned that the prosperity of the wicked is only brief.

God's recipe for happiness may be stated in the following manner:

I. Stop Fretting.

"Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity." The Psalmist is not commending an attitude of indifference toward evil when he forbids us to fret. Rather, he is urging us to meet it gallantly instead of merely whining about it. When Hamlet faced a trying situation that should have brought out the best in him, he only whined and complained that he was ever born to set it right. To fret is to face life in a spirit of faithless whining instead of cheerful courage.

Various things cause people to fret. Some work hard, get tired, let the nerves get frayed and become irritable and fretful. After his apparent victory on Mount Carmel, Elijah ran eighteen miles to Jezreel and in utter weariness flung himself down under a juniper tree and in desperation prayed somewhat after this fashion: "Lord, I am the only good man left in the world, and I hope that I won't have to remain here much longer." Elijah's trouble was that he was physically exhausted and bitterly discouraged. Tired and discouraged, he gave way to fretting.

Others fret because life deals harshly with them. Having suffered loss of some kind, they feel as if no other ever suffered as they. Still others are hurt because of what life withholds. When their dreams fail to come true, they conclude that life has cheated them. In some cases people suffer because of the successes of their acquaintances.

Fretting, or worrying, is one of the most destructive habits. It mars both physical and spiritual life. Half an hour's worry will take a bigger toll of physical strength and nervous energy than a whole day of hard but contented work. Breakdowns in health are caused far more frequently by worry than by work. Worrying is sinful. It springs from a determination to have one's own way. Worrying is also silly. There is nothing that is any more foolish and useless than fretting and whining. Nobody ever made a contribution to anything worthwhile by merely complaining and airing his grievances. Worrying destroys one's usefulness. If you want to know an improved method for losing friends and influencing people in the wrong direction, just cultivate the habit of complaining and worrying.

Dr. J. B. Gambrell told the story of an old man who was coming into Fort Worth from the West and was anxious to make connection with the train for Dallas. For some reason, the train stopped out on the prairie. The passengers began to raise the windows and look down toward the engine. Soon all the men were out on the ground, most of them murmuring and complaining. The old man passed the time profitably in reading his New Testament and humming stanzas of great old hymns. Finally, a beautiful lady began to look at her watch and prance up and down the aisle of the coach. She stood directly in front of the old man, who sat with calmness, poise and patience, humming his song. She said, "Why, pray tell me, do they insist on staying out here in the country? I must get to Fort Worth. Why don't they go on?" The old man looked up and smiled and said, "Lady, this train does not run on the steam that you get up." If she learned a lesson, it was doubtless worth all that it cost and more. Fretting never helps but always hinders or hurts. Why not quit it? We burn blood, burst nerve cells, waste energy and sometimes wreck health in useless fretting. There are two things about which we ought never to worry -- the ones that we can help and the ones we can't help. If you can help your situation, quit worrying and set yourself to the task; if you can't help it, it is silly to worry about it.

II. "Trust In The Lord, And Do Good."

Why not trust in the Lord, since He has never been known to fail a human being. This trust is a vital relationship with God through Christ, which issues in the practical details of good neighborliness. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

We can trust His love. His marvelous and matchless love for us is a guarantee that He will do His best for "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

How the tho't enthralls me
That whate'er befalls me,
One will always love me the same;
Not a trial ever causes Him to sever
From the ones who honor His name.

He will keep His promise to me,
All the way with me He will go;
He has never broken any promise spoken;
He will keep His promise, I know.

We can trust the Lord's wisdom, even though we cannot trust the wisdom of men. We are never certain as to what is best for us, but since He is infinitely wise we can trust His wisdom. Moreover, we can trust His power. He, Who spoke the world into existence and created man in His own image, certainly has power to fulfill His promises of love and wisdom. We can trust Him with unwavering confidence. He loved us and died for us, and has sufficient wisdom and power to provide for us. That is exactly what He promises to do. The person who trusts in the Lord and does what good he can do shall certainly not starve. David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

III. "Delight Thyself Also In The Lord."

This simply means that we are to look to the Lord for the deeper, the finer and the more abiding joys of life. Those who look to the things of this world for joy will meet with disappointment. There is such a thing as worldly pleasure, but it is

trivial and transitory. When we look to the Lord for the finer, richer, deeper and sweeter joys of life, we shall not be disappointed. Satan promises much, but is a poor paymaster. The Lord promises much and gives more than He promises. A person who delights himself in the Lord will desire the things that are right, "And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." To delight in anything or anyone is to be greatly pleased with and to take great pleasure in it or them. Delight thyself in His name, word, works, will and ways.

IV. "Commit Thy Way Unto The Lord."

"Commit thy way" means an unconditional surrender of your will and ways to the will of God. You can't manage your life successfully if you live independently of God. You can't straighten out the trials of life which are entangled so hopelessly. Life's problems are too perplexing and intricate for your solution of them. He is watching, waiting and listening for you to say:

"Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!
Fill with Thy spirit, Till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me!"

If our loads are rolled over on the Lord, or committed unto the Lord, and our trust is in Him, He will give us strength sufficient for our every need.

The Christian has committed himself to a loving and infinite Father, therefore he will not fear. He has placed his trust in One Who has never failed and never can fail His people. Along the way of life there may be times when the sunshine is dim, the clouds lower and the storm breaks, but still the trusting heart is unafraid. The One Whom he follows knows the way in the darkness as well as in the light. He is our shelter in the time of storm. His presence goes with us daily and will go with us forever.

An oft-repeated story is of the passenger on board ship during a great storm at sea. Greatly frightened, as were all the others, he made his way with much difficulty to the bridge. When he returned to the cabin the group was surprised to see that his fear apparently was gone. His answer to their question was, "I looked into the pilot's face and he smiled."

The Psalmist would have us to roll our heavy burdens over on the Lord, knowing full well that He will care for us. Do you recall how Monica prayed all night that her wayward and wicked son Augustine might be prevented from sailing the next morning from Alexandria to Italy, because she was sure that if he were removed from her personal influence he never would be converted. In the morning, however, he sailed for Italy. In Milan, under the influence of Ambrose, he was converted and saved. Thus God denied Monica the prayer of a nighttime in order that He might answer her prayer of a lifetime.

"He cannot fail, for He is God,
He cannot fail, He'll keep His word,
He cannot fail, He'll see you through,
He cannot fail, He'll answer you."

V. "Rest In The Lord, And Wait Patiently For Him."

Rest is the one thing for which the soul sighs and the heart hungers. The idea of rest is an old one, but the need for it is as imperative as ever. Rest is as essential to life as food. The Psalmist makes clear where this rest is to be found, namely, "in

the Lord." The soul's one and only hope for real and abiding rest is "in the Lord." The Lord is the one and only source of that inner heart rest which satisfies and endures. It was our Lord Jesus Christ Who stood in the midst of the jostling crowds and extended this gracious invitation and its attached promise: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). It is truly wonderful to hear Him say, "Come unto me....and I will rest you."

Rest in the Lord, my soul;
Commit to Him thy way.
What to thy sight seems dark as night
To Him is bright as day.

Rest in the Lord, my soul;
He planned for thee thy life.
Brings fruit from rain, brings good from pain
And peace and joy from strife.

Rest in the Lord, my soul;
This fretting weakens thee,
Why not be still, accept His will?
Thou shalt His glory see.

Instead of parading our troubles, if we will only roll our burdens over on the Lord in submission to His precious will, we shall find perfect rest. A great Christian Negro tried to sing it into our hearts in the words:

When your enemies assail, and your heart begins to fail,
Don't forget that God in heaven answers prayer;
He will make a way for you and will lead you safely thro';
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

Leave it there, leave it there,
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there;
If you trust and never doubt,
He will surely bring you out;
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

If your body suffers pain, and your health you can't regain,
And your soul is almost sinking in despair,
Jesus knows the pain you feel, He can save and He can heal;
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.