

"Fret Not Thyself"
A Mid-week Study, May 6, 2020

Many years ago I learned the marvelous value of finding parallel verses (or principles) in Old and New Testament passages. As Paul teaches us in Romans 15:4, there is much to be appreciated from Old Testament teachings, even though we are not under Old Testament law today (Romans 7:1-4; Colossians 2:13-15).

A favorite parallel of mine is the principle of peace found in Philippians 4 and Psalm 37. Stop here and read carefully Philippians 4:4-13 then Psalm 37, all of it, but focus particularly on verses 1-11.

In Philippians 4:4-13, God is teaching us through Paul's pen to both pray and to focus our minds on positive things. Not only will the *peace of God* be with us (v. 7) but also God Himself, the *God of peace* will be with us. Those promises only apply if we follow (*do*) verses 4-6 and focus our minds on the right things (v. 8-9). Remember, God has never given us a command that He has not empowered us to accomplish. Therefore, we must have within our grasp the ability to do those things commanded in this passage.

Now focus on Psalm 37. "Fret not thyself" (KJV), "Do not fret" (NASB) because of evil doers. *Please* note that God is not promising to swoop down and deliver you from fret (worry, anxiety). He is actually commanding us, individually, to not fret! Again, He is calling us to accomplish, within our own minds, the very thing He has empowered us to do - *Do not fret!* As you read verses 1-11, notice specifically the commands given that we must indeed have the power to accomplish:

Do not fret
Trust in the Lord and do good
Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness
Delight yourself in the Lord
Commit your way to the Lord
Trust also in Him
Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him
Do not fret
Cease from anger and forsake wrath
Do not fret
Be humble and delight yourself in prosperity

We see a lot of commands in such a short passage. Notice that each of these is accompanied with a blessing or an expectation. So many times we wonder where the blessings are and when they will come. Most of the time, they are right around the corner waiting for us to follow the command. Then, and only then should we expect to reap the harvest of blessings, whether they are physical, spiritual or emotional.

Sometimes enemies are easily seen and identified. Sometimes they are nebulous or even invisible. Sometimes we discover that the enemy is self and our lack of obedience to God's commands. Whether the enemies are visible, or invisible (like the present Corona virus) the beautiful commands and resulting blessings of Philippians 4 and Psalm 37 are still very real and unspeakably precious.

As we continue the boredom and frustration of the current lockdowns and even the possible governmental over-reach, may we all remember that no challenge on earth can negate the promises of God, if and when we follow His directives!

May God's peace overwhelm your spirit as you focus your thoughts on the right things.