

PSALM 37:1-40 *selected verses*
GOOD AND EVIL -- FLIPSIDES

Are you familiar with the term “flipside”? It was very common when music was not played on CDs—that is, compact discs—but on vinyl records. Songs were on both sides—a hit song on the front and a so-so song on the back, or the flipside. We still consider coins in that way. Random decisions are made by flipping for heads or tails. This morning in our text, King David is talking about opposite sides of life—Good and Evil. “Good” describes God, the Lord of Truth, Love, and Forgiveness. It also describes those who are His Children through Christ—that is, sinners forgiven by faith in Christ and accounted “saints” in the eyes of the Lord. These He will raise up from the grave on the Last Day and take to the enter eternal life of heaven. On the other hand, there is “Evil.” Evil describes Satan, who was created a good angel, but rebelled against God and was cast forth from God’s presence and blessings. Satan operates on hate and lies. He aims at the eternal devastation of every man, woman, and child. Evil attacks and persecutes Good. The Devil wants to convince you that faith in Christ is foolish, useless, and a waste of time. These two very opposite forces are at work upon you each day.

Will you make it? Will you the believer, the forgiven sinner, the saint through faith in Christ, reach the bliss of heaven? Or will you be caught in the quicksand of evil and mired in the slurry of unbelief, leading to eternity in hell after being raised up and judged on the Last Day? So easily the child of God forgets that the heavenly Father knows you can’t make it on your own. He sent a gift to you in Jesus, who was punished for you, who rose in victory, who showers you with forgiveness, who keeps Satan and his evil intentions at bay. *“If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:31-32)!*

Psalm 37 is a simple yet wonderful psalm by King David. David faced plenty of evil. King Saul and other opponents were on the outside. On the inside, his own sinful heart consented to adultery and murder. He learned again of God’s merciful forgiveness: *“The Lord has put away your sin; you are not going to die” (II Samuel 12:13)*. Psalm 37 offers wonderful encouragement for the believer, the child-of-God-in-Christ. Do not trust in self or in the smooth-talk of others. Trust the Lord of forgiveness and salvation—for victory and the upper hand against evil. The Psalm tells us what the evil do, and where they will end. The Psalm tells us what the believers / the righteous-in-Christ do, and where they will end. Various verses have been selected. Verses speaking of believers are in *gray*. Verses speaking of the wicked are in *yellow* --Caution! Noteworthy thoughts regarding either side are in *bold*.

¹ *Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.*

² *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.*

³ *Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.*

⁴ *Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

⁵ *Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.*

⁹ *For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.*

¹² *The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth.*

¹³ *The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming.*

¹⁶ *A little that a righteous man has Is better than the riches of many wicked.*

¹⁸ *The LORD knows the days of the upright, And their inheritance shall be forever.*

²⁰ *But the wicked shall perish; And the enemies of the LORD,
Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away.*

²¹ *The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives.*

²⁴ *Though he [the righteous] fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.*

²⁵ *I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his seed begging bread.*

²⁶ *He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed.*

³⁵ *I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a native green tree.*

³⁶ *Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more; Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found.*

³⁹ *But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in the time of trouble.*

⁴⁰ *And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked and save them, because they trust in Him.*

Let's see what the wicked do, and see where they end? ¹ *Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.* Are you afraid when evil that confronts you, or afraid that it will confront you? Yes! What are some things that cause you to fret and wring your hands? Is it the declining moral standards and values in our nation? What will our children and grandchildren have to face in the next five years, twenty years, fifty years? Will they give in? Or, is it fear of a wicked one-world government? Or is it the torment of cancer? On a different note, are you envious of the smooth "sailing" that mockers of God and Jesus seem to have? *I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men (Psalm 73:3).* But fret not. Our text says, ² *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.* ⁹ *For evildoers shall be cut off.* Before God they are nothing—just dime-a-dozen grass that is cut down, quickly dries up, fit for cattle food, blown away by the wind, or burned. They are nothing. Years back, if a girl was being annoyed by a boy, she might scornfully say to him, "Go, dry up." That's the status of the wicked—dried up! ----- ¹² *The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth.* ¹³ *The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming.* Though wickedness and evil comes knocking at your door, though Satan gnash his teeth in our face, you the Christ-believer, you and all Christians, all the Invisible Church of God, are safe. God laughs at them! What a put-down! They can't "out-ace" God. Their day is coming, in spite of their "glory," ²⁰ *the wicked shall perish; And the enemies of the LORD, like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away.* Just as short-lived as the spring blossoms on the prairie, just as short lived as blooms in the desert after an unexpected rain, likewise so short-lived and powerless are the forces of evil. They are like smoke—even if a lot of smoke. It dissipates into the air. The forces of evil against you will be no more! ³⁵ *I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a native green tree.* ³⁶ *Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more; Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found.* They shall be gone. ----- Finally, nte: ²¹ *The wicked borrows and does not repay.* Have you done that?

On the OTHER SIDE, let's look at the children of God, those righteous in Christ. King David says, ³ *Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.* What does he mean to feed on His faithfulness? That is, to refresh your heart and soul regularly in the faithfulness that God has shown in the past. Look at your own life, but even better look at His Word. God in His love has stood by you in spite of your words against Him and words to the harm of others. In spite of your proud judging and fault finding attitude against others. In spite of your ho-hum attitude toward the Lord and His House. Consider His faithfulness to you through His Son. Isaiha says, *"You have cast all my sins behind Your back (Isaiah 38:17)—out of view!* Consider the faithfulness of a spouse who stands loyal and strong while being treated like a nobody. Even more so, then, God maintains His commitment to you, and in Jesus casts your sins behind His back. Be delighted to serve Him! *Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.* Every desire in keeping with spiritual life and forgiveness is granted by Him! ----- ⁵ *Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.* The Lord "has your back." ¹⁶ *A little that a righteous man has Is better than the riches of many wicked.* Don't worry about being short-changed on this earth, or getting the "short end of the stick" in comparison with others and especially the wicked. You are better off. ¹⁸ *The LORD knows the days of the upright, And their inheritance shall be forever.* The Lord knows you each day. He has heaven awaiting as your inheritance! Inheritance! You are precious to Him! ----- ²⁴ *Though he [the righteous] fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.* You will trip in this life. Setbacks will come, heartaches will enter, sins will overtake you. But the Lord is there with His forgiving hand in Christ to pick you up and brush you off. He cares for you. Trust Him! --- *The righteous shows mercy and gives.* ²⁵ *I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his seed begging bread.* ²⁶ *He [the righteous] is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed.* Unlike the wicked who borrow and do not repay, the righteous give and lend! And never come up short! ----- ³⁹ *The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in the time of trouble.* "Salvation"—being saved from trouble. He saves you with His mighty arm from every trouble that your sin causes you, that other sinners cause you, that Satan himself foists upon you. *"God is our refuge and strength" (Psalm 46:1).* ----- ⁴⁰ *And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked and save them, because they trust in Him.* The particular Hebrew word for "deliver" has the idea of "slipping out of someone's grasp and escaping." Think of a fish slipping out of the hand back into the water! The Lord "delivers," and the Lord "saves." The word "save" is the very word from which comes the name "Jesus." Jesus means "Savior." The angel said to Joseph, *"You shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* (Matthew 1:21). "Jesus Saves!—words often written on a cross. In Christ, evil is out! In Christ, good is in! In Christ, the Father is on your side. On the flipside, the devil and all that he can muster are defeated. TRUST THE LORD! FEAR NOT!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---