

Be Delighted

May 23, 2021

In the 1987 movie titled, “Overboard”, a woman falls from her yacht into the water and loses her memory. A carpenter, who had been doing some work on her yacht, comes to the hospital pretending to be her husband. He takes her home and she becomes the mother to his four sons. She becomes a good mother to the boys and encourager to the man in his hectic life.

Near the end of the movie, she gets her memory back and goes back to her old life on the yacht. But the carpenter and his sons decide they want her to come back and go to find her, getting a lift on a Coast Guard ship. At the end, she agrees she loves the carpenter and his sons. She was already planning to divorce her husband who knew where she was and did not come to her rescue when she was in the hospital with amnesia.

The carpenter is amazed she would give up her rich life for him and the boys. She then informs him that she isn’t giving up anything. All the riches, the yacht, etc. are hers, not her husband’s.

In the last scene we see the four sons sitting on the deck of the Coast Guard ship writing things on tablets of paper. The woman asks the carpenter what they are doing and he answers, “They are making out their Christmas lists.”

So the boys love her, appreciate her, and want her as a mom. But they also want all their material wishes fulfilled by her money.

Some people treat God like that. They like being a Christian. They want a relationship with God. But they also have a wish list they want God to fill for them. They gravitate to verses in the Bible that sound like God will give you whatever you want. One of those is our subject this morning. It is Psalm 37:4.

Psalm 37:4 (NIV) Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

A TV star said this is her favorite verse in the Bible. She said If you focus on being a force for good, then goodness will come to you. She left the Lord out of the whole thing. She was delighting in the good she could do and receive. She was NOT delighting herself in God. She took a verse about God and interpreted it in a way that left God out. The verse says to delight in God. She did not do so.

That isn’t much different than the Christian woman who told me this was her favorite verse because she wanted a husband. She believed that if she went to church and said her prayers that God was going to give her a husband. She turned a verse about God into a verse about religion and personal wish fulfillment.

She was like the boys on the boat making out their lists. She loved God in her own way, but was really focused on getting her wish list fulfilled.

That is NOT what this verse is about at all. That is NOT the meaning of this verse. Let's take a closer look at what it DOES say. We must start at the beginning of this Psalm to see the context.

Psalm 37:1-2 (NIV) Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.

There are many sinful desires that tempt us in these bodies of death that we live in. We are tempted to pursue comfort and pleasures. Fulfilling these often involves sin. We may be tempted to envy those who have what we don't, even if they got them through bad behavior.

The writer of this psalm instructs us not to envy such people. He reminds us that they will not succeed indefinitely. Their way of life is not the best way, not the right way, not the righteous way to live. This Psalm is a word against doing such things. Don't be envious of those who do wrong. That is repeated several times in the Psalms and in Proverbs.

Instead, the writer points us to God, to Yahweh.

Psalm 37:3 (NIV) Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

Trust in him. Do good out of devotion to him. Live in the land he has given you and be content with what he has provided. God gave them the farms they lived on, the cities they lived in. God provided for their basic needs. He reminds them to savor what God has provided and trust him to continue to provide. It is in this context that verse 4 appears.

Psalm 37:4-6 (NIV) Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

The word delight is not about obedience to someone. Delight has to do with what you enjoy. This verse is calling for them to do more than trust in Yahweh. It is an invitation to delight in Him, to celebrate him. It was a call to make God and his will for them the object of their desire.

Instead of being a blank check for a selfish wish list, verse 4 means to make him your delight, fellowship with him your goal, and he will make sure you reach that goal.

(1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 15:2; Jeremiah 29:13; Hebrews 11:5)

Make God the focus of your desire and He will fulfill that desire. He will manifest his presence to you. You will know you have met the living God.

In the verses that follow, then, he calls us to refrain from envy of the wicked, refrain from anger, refrain from violence, refrain from injustice, refrain from desiring what the wicked have and do. Look at how he words it in verse 16.

Psalm 37:16-17 (NIV) Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous.

There is the implied promise that God will provide for their basic needs. Look at verse 25.

Psalm 37:25 (NIV) I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

So, verse 4 is not a promise that God will fulfill your wish list, whatever is on it. Instead, it is calling you to make God your wish. Make fellowship with him your desire. Delight in him as the object of your desire and he will fulfill that desire.

Let me then encourage you to delight in Him, to make him your desire. **Let me encourage you to savor the Lord.**

Do you know how to savor things? I don't mean save things. I know some of you are really good at saving things. Your basement or garage are full of saved things.

No, I am speaking of savoring. I encourage you to savor the Lord. Webster's New World Dictionary (Second Edition, 3rd answer) defines it this way:

Savor = "to enjoy with appreciation"; "dwell on with delight"

When we savor something we are giving it focused attention with joy in the object of that attention. We are thinking about it, and doing so with pleasure.

For example, most people like ice cream. Scientists say we like ice cream because of the "mouth feel" of it. Sure, we like the sweet taste of whatever flavor we chose. But the science behind ice cream reveals that we also like the feeling of creaminess in our mouths.

I agree. That is why I don't like really cold, hard ice cream. I don't sense that creaminess if it is frozen solid. It is when it is about 30 degrees, and some of it is slightly melting that it feels best and gives the most flavor. I savor it then, eating it in slow, small bites. I have learned to savor my ice cream.

You can also savor an activity. Whenever I get out on my bicycle, as soon as I hit the street from my driveway, the joy of riding a bicycle comes over me. I savor that feeling of freedom, of exercise, of the breeze I create moving against me.

I also savor memories of the past. I savor taking walks around the seminary campus with my wife when we were engaged. I savor memories of the adoption process of our sons. I savor annual vacations to South Carolina.

However, if there is something else on my mind, I can eat ice cream and hardly notice it. If I am focused on a TV show, I might eat a serving of ice cream and not savor it at all. To savor something your attention needs to be on that something.

I am sure there are things you enjoy. But do you take the time and attention to savor them, to delight in them? If so, then you are on the right track to delighting in God.

Focus your attention on your Lord. Think about the relationship you have with him. Savor the relationship you have with him. Delight yourself in him. Savor your salvation, savor his love and mercy and grace to you.

Savor the memory of when and how you became his follower. This is one way to guard against apathy towards your salvation.

If you take delight in the Lord, those sinful desires in your heart are going to get changed by the Holy Spirit into what God desires for you. Your sanctification will increase.

Delight yourself in your heavenly Father, in Jesus your Savior, in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Seek fellowship with your God and he will see that desire fulfilled. He wants that more than you do. So seek him. Seek him with your whole being. Take delight in him. Enjoy the fellowship when it occurs. Trust him to do what you now know he wants to do with you.

God loves you so much he sent Jesus to die for your sins. But God wanted more than to save you. He wants to fellowship with you. He wants you to know him intimately, fully. He delights in you and wants you to delight in him. Do that this week as you spend time with him in prayer.