

Monday March 1 Psalm 37 – how not to fret

- 1 Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;
- 2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.
- 3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
- 4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- 5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:
- 6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.
- 7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.
- 8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.
- 9 For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.
- 10 A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.
- 11 But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.

Today we continue with the theme of FEAR as we journey through Lent 2021. Another psalm, this time Psalm 37, which starts with the words: ‘Do not fret’. You could also translate the ancient Hebrew on which our English-language bibles are based with the phrase ‘don’t get steamed up’. And the psalm keeps saying it – ‘don’t get steamed up’.

Let’s face it, there’s plenty to ‘get steamed up’ about during a pandemic, even when there’s good news beginning to seep through, as vaccines developed in record time are seen to work, and people are getting their first jabs in large numbers.

But it’s easy to say ‘don’t get steamed up’: much more difficult to do it – or, not do it, if you see what I mean. Some people go for techniques like yoga to help them; here in the rest of Psalm 37, you’ll find that we’re presented with a strategy, a 3-point plan: LOOK UP, LOOK AHEAD and BE CONSTRUCTIVE.

- LOOK UP – I’ll come back to this tomorrow. In the meantime, let’s take a quick look at the other two points in the Psalm 37 strategy:
- LOOK AHEAD – It was the late Captain Sir Tom Moore who said many months ago, “The sun will shine again; the clouds will go away.” He was well aware that there’d be bad times to go through first, but he did us all a service by looking further ahead, You might find yourself thinking about the vaccination you’re still waiting for, the holiday you would love to go on, gathering again with other worshippers in the church you haven’t seen the inside of for months, or having a big hug with the family and friends you’ve not been with for ages. We haven’t seen our family, including our little granddaughter, for well over a year now.
- BE CONSTRUCTIVE – here Psalm 37 tells us what to do and what *not* to do to be constructive:

First, don’t get angry – that does more harm than good and it won’t make you feel any better. Perhaps someone has let you down; perhaps you think the politicians made wrong decisions at the wrong times. But don’t be angry with them – it’s a waste of time.

Second, ‘do good’. One of the things that make my heart glad when I watch the TV news is when it features someone, some organisation, some community, some neighbourhood, where they’ve found a new way of supporting each other or reaching out to people who are finding the going especially tough. Could more of us be involved in this sort of thing? And if you can’t get out because of age or medical issues, you can still pray that others will do these things that you wish you could be doing, and you can rejoice that others already are.