

Good, Simple, Strong Words

Scripture Reading — Psalm 37:1-8

*Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.
—Psalm 37:8 —*

We find many quiet but powerful words in the early verses of Psalm 37—“trust,” “do good,” “dwell,” “enjoy,” “delight,” “commit,” “be still,” “wait.”

And all these words are used in reference to the Lord. The psalmist calls us to “trust in the LORD”; “take delight in the LORD”; “commit your way to the LORD”; “be still before the LORD”; “wait patiently for him.” And we can only “do good” in the strength of the Lord. We can only “dwell in the land” that God gives us. We can only “enjoy safe pasture” that the Lord promises and provides for us.

Fretting is discouraged three times in these verses. It doesn’t take long to figure out why. When we fret, we do not trust in the Lord, we do not delight in the Lord, we do not commit our way to the Lord, we are not still before the Lord, and we do not wait patiently for the Lord. When we fret, we do not do good, we do not dwell with God, and we do not enjoy the Lord’s safe pasture.

Fretting, like a termite, nibbles at the trusses of trust. Fretting dehydrates our delight into the dryness of despair. Fretting babbles and gabbles away our stillness.

Trusting in the Lord and fretting are incompatible.

Lent is a good time to turn aside from fretting and be filled with faith.

Prayer

Lord, release us from fretting—for the glory of your name, for the good of others, and for our own peace. In your name we hope. Amen.

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