

WHEN THE UPRIGHT GET UPTIGHT -- #2 -- The Sin of It -- Ps. 37
Ps. 37 1-11

Now yesterday morning I began this series of three studies on the subject of WTUGU and three times in these passages, the ~~XXXX~~ psalmist tells us to fret not. We saw yesterday how a believer living in a fretful world subject to the pressures and anxieties of this world finds himself very vulnerable and susceptible to this idea of becoming fretful. Of getting hot and bothered and being filled w/ anxiety, and worry about a situation or about the circumstances of life. And yesterday morning we discussed the source of fretfulness. Why do people get uptight. Why does a believer find himself living on the ragged edge of anxiety when he finds himself in a situation or circumstance that he cannot control and he pushes the panic button and he begins to be worried and nervous and begins to be filled w/ ~~XX~~ panic, and I suggested to you that there were three sources of this, three things that cause us to be ~~XXX~~ uptight and for the benefit of those who were not here yesterday and for those who were here but weren't paying attention I want to mention these three. You know, most preaching is telling people things they have already heard but haven't done anything about. And so let me just mention these three - #1 the source of anxiety and fretfulness is the INJUSTICE OF LIFE, in inequities of life, things aren't always fair. And evil men seem to prosper while good men seem to be in straights. And so that's the first cause - the INJUSTICES or the inequities OF LIFE. The second cause of fretfulness is the INACTIVITY OF GOD -- the fact that God is seemingly doing nothing. That there is an apparent indifference on the part of God. We know He could stop these things and yet He does not. The inactivity of God. And the third reason that we mentioned was because of our IGNORANCE OF THE WAYS OF GOD. We fret ~~W~~ because we do not understand God. We are misunderstanding His purpose, what He is doing. And we mentioned that God works on a different level - He works ~~o~~ on a different time level and He works on a different value level. Now this morning I want us to look again at this subject of When the Upright Get Uptight and we're going to focus on THE SIN OF FRETFULNESS. In the morning we'll talk about the SOLUTION TO IT, the way out,

the divine alternative, but this morning we want to look at the sin of fretfulness. You say, now preacher, ~~XXXX~~ is it a ~~XX~~ sin to fret? Well absolutely. It certainly is. As a matter of fact, probably the most common sin among God's people is the sin of worry. And the obvious reason is because it is in plain violation to the word of God. Now you know that's interesting to me because there are a lot of people who have the idea you can't help but worry. You know, it's built in, its a part of human nature and it is impossible for us to live without worry. Well, let me give you my opinion, which I greatly respect in that matter. The moment the Word of God commands us not to worry that means that we can obey. For the Lord never gives to us a command w/o giving to us at the same time the ability to obey that command. The Lord will never put upon you a burdensome commandment. That's why John says, "His commandments are not grievous, they're not burdensome. Why? Because w/ every command that God gives He imparts at the same tme the ability to obey the command. For instance, when Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus he gave to Lazarus an impossible command. He said, "Lazarus, come forth." Well now that's impossible. Lord, you can't expect Lazarus to come forth. If he could have come forth he would have done it before now. But he did. Why? Because when Jesus gave the command at the same time He imparted to Lazarus the power to obey that command. He met a man one day that had a withered arm and he said to that man ~~XXXXXX~~ "stretch forth thine hand". Well now, Lord, that's ~~X~~ impossible. That's whats wrong w/ a withered arm - you can't stretch it forth. But he did. Why? Because when Jesus gave that command to the man and the same time He imparted to that ~~XXX~~ fellow divine ability to obey. So you can take every command in the Bible and look at it as a promise. And this way the commandments are no longer grievous. They are no longer burdensome because every commandment is a promise and when God commands us to do something that is as good as God promising that we can.

And so Paul, writing to the Philippians, says, "Be careful for nothing." Don't worry about anything. But in everything w/ prayer and supplication and thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God which passes all understanding shall stand guard over your heart and minds through Christ Jesus." It is a sin for us to worry because it is in plain violation of the Word of the will of God. Now I want to suggest to you three reasons why it is a sin. Three things that are wrong w/ it.

#1 - IT IS A SIN FOR US TO FRET BECAUSE IT REVEALS A LACK

OF TRUST IN God. Now that is the most ~~XXXX~~ obvious reason.

I want you to see the connection in these first three verses. ~~XXX~~ He says, fret not thyself because of evildoers neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good so shall thou dwell in the land verily thou shalt be fed. Now, do you see the contrast? First of all he says fret not thyself because of evildoers, trust in the Lord. And those two things are placed in contrast the one to the other. You see, both of those are reactions. Both of those are reactions. Fretfulness is a reaction and faith is a reaction and those two are mutually exclusive reactions. If you have faith, you don't fret. If you fret that simply reveals a lack of faith. And so if a man is going to fret he is revealing a lack of trust in God. Now the fact of the matter is that all of Christian living is nothing more than my relaxing - really. And again I say that I do not want to oversimplify these matters and I do not believe that I am. But you think about it, Christian living, as a matter of fact this whole business of salvation from start to finish is nothing more than human reaction to divine action. We love Him, why? Because He first loved us. He says, "Be ye holy." Why? Because I am holy. We seek Him, why? Because He sought us. Everything in the Christian life is my response, my reaction, Now, the real test of your spiritual maturity is not your actions, but your reactions. You see, anybody

can act well. I want to be honest w/ you this morning, I have very little trouble w/ acting right. You know, I guess that you may question~~x~~ that a little bit but for the sake of illustration, don't. But you know, they say you exaggerate for the sake of illustration, I'm exaggerating. But my major problem is not acting right. I can get up in the morning and if everything seems just perfect and everything is just right, then I tell you ~~what~~, I can act like a saint. My trouble is reacting. That's my trouble- reacting. Because, folks, I don't know, but I don't think I've~~x~~ ever awakened in the morning when everything was just right. As a matter of fact, waking up means something's wrong/ I think getting up is a lousy way to start the day. I do my hardest work before breakfast, that's getting up. And ~~x~~ you know I'm one of these people that when I wake up in the morning it's doomsday. You know, something about my metabolism or something, I~~XXXX~~~~XXXX~~ ^{just} immediately realize there's a dark day ahead because I had to get up. And I don't recall ever living one day when everything was absolutely perfect and everybody just said the right thing, did the right thing, and acted the right way. You see my greatest test in Christian living is not my actions, but it is my reactions. As a matter of fact, if you read the Sermon on the Mount you will find it deals largely - almost exclusively w/ reactions. If a man commands you to go one mile, go w/ him two. If he slaps you on one cheek, turn the other. If he sues you for your coat, give him your cloak, you see. All through it is reaction. Blessed are the merciful -- that's a reaction, blessed are the peacemakers, that's a reaction. Blessed are those who are persecuted, that's a reaction. When the apostle Peter in the first epistle presents Jesus Christ as our example, he suffered for us leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. Do you know what he points to? He points not to the actions of Jesus but to the reactions of Jesus. He says for he when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he was threatened, he threatened not but

committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. And the true test of my spiritual maturity is not how I act, but how I react. Now fretting and faith are both reactions. Fretfulness is a reaction to circumstances and faith is a reaction to the word of God. It is how I respond and react to what God has said to me. Now, you cannot fret and have faith at the same time. They are mutually exclusive reactions. And fretfulness, anxiety, reveals a lack of trust in God. Now I think this takes three forms. #1 when I begin to fret and worry and complain about adverse circumstances I am #1- denying the right of God to run my life. Do you know what I believe is the basic affirmation of faith? It is that God is a sovereign God and He has the right to run my life. That's the basic affirmation of faith. The real test of faith is that I have confidence in God's blueprint for my life and am confident that what He has arranged for my daily life will be for my good and His glory. And when I find myself moving into panic & palance over some difficult situation I am denying the right of God to rule and run my affairs. As a matter of fact when I begin to murmur and complain against circumstances, I'm not really murmuring and complaining against the circumstances. You see, in the book of Exodus when the people were murmuring against Moses and Aaxon because they had no water and then they had bitter water, and every time they turned around there was something wrong. Something they couldn't fit into, something to complain about and they murmured and murmured and murmured against Moses=== in Exodus chapter 16 the Lord comes to Moses and Aaron and says, "dont let this upset you boys for they are not murmuring against you, they are murmuring against me. And the number one sin of the wilderness wanderings were there murmurings. Now why was it a sin? ~~XXXXXX~~ Because in murmuring ~~XXXX~~ against the circumstances they were in fact murmuring against the Lord. And when ~~XXX~~ you and I begin to complain and gripeand groan and grow

bitter about a circumstance, we are in fact accusing God of mismanaging our lives. Well the only reason we fret is because we are saying, if I were God I Wouldn't do it this way. Isn't that right? Well the fact of the matter is, if you were God, you would. If you were God you would do it exactly like God has done it, friend. The only problem is, you're not God and you think you are. You see, we looked down into a well and saw our reflection in the water and we said, it's the Lord. And we are creating God in our own image. And we are saying, now if I were the Lord I would not have done this. And this is the only reason people get uptight about what consider to be injustices. Any time ~~any~~ somebody starts complaining and say, "well I just believe if somebody out yonder on the far flung mission fields if they don't hear about Jesus they'll go to heaven anyway, why it would just be absolutely unfair for God to let those poor lost souls go to hell because they've not heard of Jesus. Now when a person says that he is just trying to defend the reputation of God. And you're saying, I am more fair than God. If I were God I would not do this, if you were God, you would, you see. And our problem is that we believe we are more fair and more just than the Lord and if we were God we would not do things ~~XXXX~~ this way. And fretfulness, and murmuring against circumstances, whether we ~~XXXXXX~~ like it or not, in the final analysis is nothing more than ~~XXXXXX~~ accusing God of mismanaging our lives, because He could have prevented whatever it is that is troubling us. It lies within His power. I hope that ~~y~~you are not a dualist. You know in the early days of Christianity there was a heresy called ~~the~~ dualism -- that believed there were two powers in the earth, in the universe - the power of good and the power of evil. And these powers were locked in mortal combat and there were times when evil triumphed to the chagrin of good. Of course, good couldn't do anything about it, but eventually good would ultimately triumph. Now that was a theory called dualism and whether you know it or not, it was heresy.

And a lot of folks today living on the edge of heresy because they believe there are two powers in the world, good and evil, and the Lord does the best He can but sometimes evil just gets out of hand and does some things He hasn't wanted it to do. Now folks, that is heresy. And it is not true. You say, well I don't understand. I don't either. Vance Havner says if I could understand it all there wouldn't be much to it. I don't know about you but I would have trouble putting my faith in a god I could understand. We're going to have to be content to let God know some things that we don't know folks. I don't understand - and I know this raises a lot of questions, I know it does. And a lot of questions that you and I can never answer, but rest assured there is an answer and God knows it, you see. It reveals a lack of faith because it denies the right of God to rule our life.

The second thing, of course, it does is obvious, it denies our DEPENDENCE UPON THE LORD. It means that we are not depending upon Him and I'll just pass on that because I want to get to this next one.

The third thing it does is it DESTROYS OUR DISTINCTIVENESS AS A BELIEVER. You say, what in the world are you talking about? It destroys the things that distinguishes us as a Christian. I want to show you something in Mt. 6 Jesus is talking about the changing affairs and circumstances of life and in the 6th chapters he says, -- you know the 6th chapter, talking about people worrying over the things of this life, "therefore -- vs 25, vs 28, vs 30 --, v 31 -- look at v. 32. After all these things do the Gentiles seek. And the word Gentiles is the word for heathen and the word for pagan. Here's what Jesus is saying to His disciples, "listen, don't fret over the necessities of life, don't worry over the circumstances, for after all these things do the heathens seek after, this is a pagan view of life. That is characteristic of the pagans and you as my disciples are not to be bothered by the same things the pagans are to be bothered by. You see, the thing that distinguishes a believer from the unbeliever is this, that he

has such restful confidence in the Lord that when circumstances militate against him and the situations oppose him, rather than fretting and worrying over them, he simply rests his case with God --that characterizes him as a believer. But when he takes those things into his own hands and begins to worry about them and fret over them, he loses his distinguishing mark as a believer and starts acting like the rest of the world. And there's nothing to distinguish him, absolutely nothing/ It reveals a lack of confidence in the Lord. I know some of us acts like Christians on Sunday and act like pagans Monday through Saturday. Because of the circumstances that we complain about and because of our fretfulness. All right, first of all it is a sin because it reveals a lack of faith in God.

The second this is, IT IS A SIN BECAUSE IT LEADS TO OTHER EVILS. Look at vs 8. ~~XXXX~~ Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. Now that last phrase is a very interesting one. One translation reads like this: "Fret not thyself it only leads to evil doings." Another translation reads like this: "Fret not thyself to thine own harm." Now the idea that the psalmist is conveying is that when you and I fret this fretting leads to activity that actually harms us. We hurt ourselves. It is a sin because it leads to other evils and it leads to self inflicted hurt. Now fretfulness is not a hermit, it cannot stand to live alone, it always invites some others to live w/ it. And you will never find fretfulness, worry, anxiety, living all by itself. It'll always gather around it a few other things. And those other things will turn on that person who is fretting and that person who is fretting is not changing anything by fretting except himself. I have seen the total landscape of a person's life change beyond recognition because of his worry and anxiety. Fretfulness will lead to bitterness and resentfulness ~~XXXX~~ against God. Fretfulness will strangle your prayer life. I have never known a person living in the whirlpool of anxiety who was able to pray at the same time. It will destroy your ability to worship God. For

when you come to the house of God, you'll find that you are unable to sing the songs of Zion. You just cannot do it. As a matter of fact, I know of a preacher who has a condition that people have to fulfill before he will ever counsel to them about their problems. If they call up and ask for an appointment he would say all right, I'll see you after next Sunday's service. And they'd say, can't I see you before then. And he'll say no, after next Sunday's services -- and you must be in both services -- Sunday morning and Sunday night, and you must sing every verse of every hymn that we sing. You must sing every verse of every hymn. And this preacher said that 99% of this people after they had been in the house of God and gave themselves, forced themselves to concentrate on the worship of the Lord, sing the hymns of Zion, 90% of them never showed up for their counseling session. I was in a city some time ago and a fellow who used to be a minister ~~was~~ came -- and the circumstances of his life that forced him out of the ministry are not important, but there he was. He had been a tremendous man of God, a tremendous preacher, tremendous talent and potential and yet circumstances had arisen in his life and the way he reacted to those circumstances, he had to finally leave the ministry. But as we talked, he talked as though nothing had ever happened and that ~~was~~ everything was all right. Trying to convey the impression that everything was just fine -- everything was all right, and the Lord is good, and such as that. Then the service started and we stood and began to sing. And you know what I noticed? This dear brother never sang a word. He never sang a word. And all during the singing he stood there, fiddling w/ his hands, looking down, feeling out of place, looking awkward. And that was the telltale sign that regardless of how he tried to fake it and regardless of what he professed, the fact ~~was~~ the man had no song in his heart and he could not sing, he could not rejoice in the Lord. You see, when we react incorrectly toward the circumstances of life, it destroys our capacity to worship God, to love God. It murders everything around us. I talked to a couple sometime ago who had had a tragedy in their

family -- their son had been killed in an automobile accident. And as I talked to them, this had happened a year or two years before, and as I talked w/ them I realized that they lost more than a son. The mother in particular was so filled w/ fretfulness and worry and anxiety and ~~XX~~ had so reacted to that tragedy that she had become bitter and resentful and she was no longer able to be a wife to her husband or a mother to her to her remaining children. And they had lost far more than that sone, they had lost their home and marriage. Why? Because her negative reaction to the circumstances of life, her fretfulness, her lack of faith in God, caused her to do herself harmand led to greater evil. He says, fret not thyself, it only leads to greater evil. And there's so much more that we could say about that, but I really feel that a great many of the problems that you and I have, I'm talking now about present emotional maladjustments = present emotional maladjustments in your life can almost invariably,exclusively be traced back to a circumstance~~X~~ that you have never, never reconciled yourself with. And I have done a lot of counseling in the years that I was a pastor, and still do and you put it down, most of the present problems, your emotional maladjustmen your present inability to cope, your present inability to live a life of steadfastness, can be traced back to some situation in your past~~X~~ that you fretted over and you reacted wrongly and you never, never, never have reconciled yourself to. It leads to harm. Fret not thyself to do evil for you only hurst yourself. The Lord knows what He is talking about, folks. Let me ask you, how do you react to these things? What is your immediate reaction? Well let me move on to the last thing --

IT IS A SIN BECAUSE ITS NEEDLESS. The most useless activity in life is worry. Jesus says to his disciples in Mt.6 "which one of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?" Somebody said, well worrying must really do a lot of good -- I said, why. Because, he said, all those things I worried about never happened. It is absolutely needless and I'll tell you two reasons. #1 - Because of the descruption of the wicked. Because of

the destruction of the wicked. He says in v. 3 we ought not to be envious of them for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb. And then look again in vs 9 and 10, for evildoers shall be cut off but those who wait upon the Lord they shall inherit the earth, for yet a little while and the wicked shall not be yea thou shalt diligently consider his place and it shall not be. Now he says, when you see the wicked out here who have no use for God and no regard for man and everything seems to be going well w/ him and you find yourself being envious of their lot in life, he says remember, remember the destruction of the wicked is inevitable, therefore don't fret over that situation. You remember the same thing was found in Ps. 73 when the psalmist said I became envious of the wicked because he said everything in their life seemed to be going well. But then I went into the sanctuary and God dealt w/ me and then I knew their end. He said I was able to realize what kind of end they would come to. But the second thing, is what I really want to zero in on-- not only is it useless because there will come the destruction of the wicked but because

THERE WILL COME THE VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS. Now I'm going to talk a little bit more about this tomorrow when we deal w/ verse 5, but I want to lay something on you this morning. He says in vv 5,6 "commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." Now look at this, "He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light and thy judgment (which could literally be translated thy reputation) as the noonday. Now what he is saying there in vs 6 is that you will be vindicated. Now folks, I want you to listen to me real good. I am convinced the #1 reason that we fret and worry and get upset and uptight is because we are afraid of how it will affect our lives. We are afraid of what it may have on our careers, on our ambitions. You think about it for a moment. Why do we worry, why do we get upset, uptight, when somebody in the church begins to oppose us, or when circumstances seem to forbid the

ongoing of our five year plan, why? Because what we fear most is not so much that immediate thing that is happening, but that it might interfere w/ what we have desired and what we have hoped for and what we have planned. And many times, you see, we fret over-- perhaps a rebellious son, not because of the son, but because of what people may think of us as a result of this situation. Now there are two things that can happen in a situation like that. One is humiliation and the other is humility. And they are not the same. Friends, it will either humiliate you or it will humble you. Now ~~if~~ if it humiliates you, then you see what you are more concerned about ~~is~~ your reputation and your career and what people think of you. ~~But~~ But if it humbles you then you could care less about what people think about it or how it ~~XXXX~~ affects your career you just want to make certain that you get all out of it that God has for you. I was talking to a lady in Denver Co about a year or so ago and she said that she was having , she was a divorced woman, her husband had left her, and she was trying to raise this teenage boy. And she said, you know he got into all kinds of trouble. And one day my pastor came to me and he said, "M'am, if you were the kind of Christian you ought to be this boy wouldn't be like this." And there was no compassion, no empathy, no understanding at all. Just said, if you were the kind of Christian woman you ought to be, the kind of mother you ought to be, then this boy would not be living like this." And I said, well what happened? Well, she said, about 6 months later his son rebelled on him and on God and got strung out on the drug scene. And I said, what happened? He quit the ministry. I want to ask you a question -- why did that father quit the ministry? Because he was broken and grieved over his son? Not on your life-- because he thought more of his reputation than he thought about anything else. Rather than being humbled by the situation, and falling on his face and saying, God, help me . He was humiliated and ran away from it. I want to tell you something, you put it down, most of our fretfulness and

our worrying , and our anxiety is because we are afraid of the disastrous effect this situation will have on our career, our ambitions, our plans. Now the Lord said all that is needless because if we commit this whole business to Him He shall bring forth our righteousness as the light. I want to tell you something, sometimes adverse situations are like a dark cloud that hangs over you that hides your righteousness. And nobody can see that you are righteous and they may say, "Aha, if that old boy were living for God this thing would not have happened." But he says, don't worry about it, don't ~~fret~~ fret over it. One of these days God will bring your righteousness out into the light and your judgment will be as ~~at~~ the noonday - everybody will be able to see you were right all along. There will be vindication. God will vindicate those who trust in Him. So it is useless. It is needless. It's unnecessary. And the apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians says, it is small thing that I am judged by you. Isn't that interesting? He says its a small thing that I am judged by you. He said there is one who judges me. You see. There's one who judges me. And the Lord Jesus Christ when He was reviled, reviled not again. When He was threatened, He threatened not, but He committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. You see. Now folks, if somebody wants to come up and try to judge you -- do you know how you ought to react? You ought to quote what Paul ~~said~~ said in Rom. 14 "why dost thou judge another man's servant?" If i'm your servant, you can judge me -but if I'm not your servant, you can't. I'm ther servant of God and He's the only one who has the right to judge me. So he says, ~~do~~ fret not. Fret not -- its absolutely useless and needless. He says he'll bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgement as the noonday. Friend, he will vindicate those that trust in Him.