

# He Will Not Forsake His Saints

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[ 0 : 00 ] Turn to Psalm 37. In the Navy, if I had a question, we'd go up to the chief.! Those who are former military or in the Navy know what a chief is.

And the chiefs, they pretty much run the Navy. They're the senior blue-collar workers, and you've got to go to the chief, and you've got to ask the chief for questions. But there'd be times you'd go to the chief, and you'd say, hey, chief, and he'd say, oh, well, I'll tell you what that is there, young man. You know, here's the answer. And sometimes the chief would give you not quite the right answer. He'd give you just a little bit off, or maybe it was his version.

So I kind of learned as a young junior officer I needed to go to the source document and read it for myself. Sometimes that might be offensive to the chief if he did it in front of him because it was his word.

Of course, I'm gospel. I know what I'm talking about. But there's a value in saying, well, I'm pretty sure I know what the answer is, but let's go to the source document together.

[ 1 : 04 ] And so that's good leadership, pulling out the source document and looking at it because as much as you might know that manual, you need to go and look at it again for refreshing because most of the stuff that we would have as manuals was written in blood, and there's no arguing those things because people have died by that.

And so here you go. This is your manual. It's written in blood. So I want to have you open it up with me. We're going to look at it because there's something about the word of God that you read instead of somebody paraphrasing it.

I have seen people just kind of like, uh-huh, Carl, if I just kind of tell them. But when they read it for themselves, they're like, wow, there's something about God's word that I get that's powerful.

I don't know how to explain it. It's just God's spirit. So in Psalm 37, let me pray. Thank you, Father, for your spirit. I ask that your spirit today meet all of us who are struggling with hope, who are struggling with discouragement, who are in a difficult situation, who are in trials.

God, or maybe we are just in a time of great joy, and yet there will be trials. There will be difficulties. There will be wicked things that will happen.

[ 2 : 25 ] And help us to turn to you. In Jesus' name, amen. So if you need a Bible, there are some Bibles in the back. But please open up Psalm 37.

We're going to be looking at that on some verses. But have you ever experienced injustice? Have you worked hard, been faithful, but not been rewarded?

Maybe you've got some difficult people in your lives. Difficult neighbors. Difficult boss. Difficult family. Been hurt by family.

Some wickedness that may have happened in your family. Or they're not maybe so wicked, but they acted wickedly. Well, maybe in your church. Ouch.

No, we Christians can't possibly do mean things to one another. Right? Well, there's two responses that we have when evil happens to us.

[ 3 : 24 ] Right? The first, we want to ask the question, exactly why? Now, if you were here for when I preached on Job, you already know the answer to why. And the why is it's all about God wants to use it in our heart.

So we're not going to talk about that today. I'm going to assume that you got it. But if not, go back and you can listen to the Job sermon. But then our second response, when we get into this difficult situation of just wickedness and it just seems hopeless, we kind of think, what?

Ugh. There's no hope. I'm stuck here. Will I ever be rescued? Will this just continue to go on? And that's pretty legit.

And as much as I ought to know better, I find myself doing that same thing. But today the main point is, God is faithful.

He will not forsake you because we take refuge in him. And the aim is that you, the aim of David here in this psalm is that you will have hope.

[ 4 : 31 ] That you will truly know that God is faithful. He won't forsake you because we can take refuge in him. He is our fortress. Now this, this also, as we look at this psalm, you might think, yeah, I know, Carl, there's, there's hope in the future.

There's hope in eternity. There's hope in eternal life. But I need hope now with this situation. And that's what David is trying to convey.

That we have hope in both. And this psalm is 40 verses and Pastor Mike said, Carl, you're not going to do all the verses, are you? And I said, no, of course not.

Well, he's not here today. So yeah, we are. We're going to go. No, it's, it's going to be divided up in like three main sections. And the, and the first chunk is there's the wicked.

And then the next chunk is there's the righteous. And then the third person who is the hero of this story is there's the Lord.

[ 5 : 41 ] So the intro and the conclusion kind of are the same thing. Let's look at verse one and two and then thirty nine and forty because verses one and two and thirty nine and forty they just bookend this whole thing and it really kind of captures the essence of chapter chapter thirty seven here.

Verse one, fret not yourself because of evil doers. Be not envious of wrongdoers for they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herbs. The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord. He is their stronghold in the time of trouble. The Lord helps them and delivers them. He delivers them from the wicked and saves them because they take refuge in him. Now in historical context as soon as you guys see salvation right away you just go to your version of salvation.

Right? But for David and the Israelites they were thinking salvation that was God coming to redeem them to restore them to rescue them from their enemies.

He was going to do that right then. Remember their version of the Messiah was not your version of Messiah. Our version of Messiah is coming on this donkey. Their version was supposed to come in a white horse and conquer. He's going to kick out those Romans.

[ 7 : 01 ] He's going to come one time not twice. God is our salvation. He's going to do something now. We need to be delivered now. So that is their mindset not so much our mindset today.

So we have to think about what is David thinking in this time. And there's a lot about the wicked here and this is a wisdom literature this psalm looks like a proverb kind of.

but in here the wicked were often fellow Israelites. They weren't necessarily those mean Amorites the Ammonites the Tibbites the Jebusites those termites eat your house.

Those were often the wicked people right amongst us. And if you think about some of the stories in the Old Testament you know there's Bob and that one thing we're doing we're having celebrating the Passover and the next thing you know Bob's getting a spear in his back because he was doing something immoral with a foreign woman.

The wicked were right amongst them. They were often their neighbors inside the camp. But God is faithful. In verse 40 you see that God is faithful he's not going to forsake you because we take refuge in him.

[ 8 : 22 ] There's an action for us. God is sovereign but man has responsibility. So there's the wicked there's the righteous and there's the Lord.

There are three main sections but then in between you kind of see reference to all three here. But let's look at the wicked first in verses 12 through 15. This section kind of talks more about the wicked.

In verse 13 we see that the wicked's day is coming. Okay that's noteworthy. The wicked's day is coming. In verse 14 we see the wicked draw the bow or draw the sword and bend the bow so there will be wicked things happening against us.

That's a fact. But God's going to hold them accountable. In verse 16 you see the wicked are often wealthy. It seems like they're prospering and they're getting away with this.

In verse 20 the wicked will vanish like smoke. It really caused you to think well what happened to the whole you reap what you sow?

[ 9 : 35 ] Well if you remember Job's friends tried to say you know Job you must have done something wrong here because you reap what you sow. And Job responded well you know that's not quite right because I know Sue and Bob and Dave down there and they're prospering very well and they've been really bad.

And so this whole reaping what you sow doesn't always work out so nice and neat. And so you see these wicked that seem to be prospering at least for the season but the wicked are here to show us something about God.

And it shows us God's character. That God is sovereign and he is faithful and he is immutable. And you know Romans 8 28 you know that in all things God is going to work for the good of those who love him and have been called according to his purpose.

So God is going to be sovereign through this and he is not going to forsake you. Would you know that he wasn't going to forsake you?

Would you know that there's hope if the wicked weren't there? So now let's look at the righteous. This is verse 23 to 31. Well first off I want you to think you read that you go yeah that's right we're righteous we're shoreline people yeah that's right we're good people.

[ 11 : 01 ] Well we are not righteous by anything that we do. We are completely righteous based upon faith and David would know this because he would be well acquainted with Abraham and Abraham was declared righteous by faith.

He was declared righteous by what he believed. So it was his belief that made him righteous. So the righteous here are righteous by faith. Well let's look at what it says in verse 24 the righteous will fall but not headlong.

You might stumble some of you have felt like yeah I've fallen but you haven't fallen headlong. Verse 25 love this verse probably captures a lot of the essence of Psalm 37 David says I was young and now I am old yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

They are always generous they lend freely and their children are a blessing. now if you're a parent let me hear an amen right there. You want your children to be a blessing and you have an opportunity to lend freely and David is saying you know I was younger and I know what it feels like. I know what you're thinking but now I'm old and I'm going to tell you God is faithful. he's not going to forsake you because we take refuge in him.

[ 12 : 44 ] Verse 29 says the righteous inherit the land forever. That's a good promise right there. In verse 30 the righteous speak wisdom and justice.

Verse 21 the righteous are generous. God is not going to forsake us. You've got to ask yourself why? Because of his glory.

He's not going to forsake you because of his glory. And these righteous verses speak to who he is and what God says and what God does. That's his glory.

Who he is, what he says, what he does. I want you to memorize that. You haven't memorized that? Memorize it. God's glory, who he is, what he says, what he does. He will not forsake us.

The righteous because God isn't forsaking them, now they have the opportunity to be a witness for him. They get to lend generously.

[ 13 : 46 ] Their children are a blessing. They are just. God wants to use us to be a witness to others.

I've probably learned the most about leadership from bad leaders, from my wicked bosses. And I've had some wicked bosses. So I've learned what just is from wicked bosses.

And my people have been blessed because of it. Otherwise, you know, I would probably have been a real jerk. I would have been a real jerk.

Not a very good leader. The Lord is the next person here who's the hero of this. This is verse 3 through 8. This section really captures some key points here.

And there's six words here I want you to think about. There's trust, delight, and commit. And then there is be still, fret not, refrain from anger.

[ 14 : 51 ] Let's look at verse three. This is trust. Trust in the Lord. And do good. Dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

So trust, I'm going to give you a definition. This is one of those Carl definitions that some people know about. This is a Carl definition. And I think this is an important definition because it represents a heart struggle.

Most of my definitions I give represent a heart struggle, a surrendering. And so with trust, when we trust, we look to the Lord and we accept what may or may not come.

We look to the Lord and we accept what may or may not come. And three characters who would know Psalm 37 very well, and you're familiar with these three guys, they were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace.

They tell King Nebuchadnezzar, maybe you remember, O King, our God is able to save us, and he will save us. But if not, look at that, but if not, it's all good.

[16:04] We're still not going to bow, and he's got us. Our God is able and will, but if not, you see, I'm looking to God as I accept what may or may not come.

Even then, they knew God was going to save them, but they held out like, it's okay if he doesn't. Because we trust in him. Now, the second part of this verse says to befriend faithfulness.

That's interesting. That literally means to feed on faithfulness, to feed on God's faithfulness. I'm going to really focus on how faithful God is.

I will be able to trust God when I really know how faithful he is, but I can't trust him until I focus on who he is and does he do what he says.

See, I'm not trustworthy, and you're not trustworthy, but God is trustworthy. And the more I focus on his faithfulness, I feed on it, then I can surrender, and I can trust him.

[17:17] So we need to feed. Next verse here is delight. Delight yourself in the Lord, he'll give you the desires of your heart. Now, right away, you're like, yeah, desires of my heart.

I'm thinking of some good desires. That'll be nice. Well, it's not quite the way it works. God does want to give you the desires of your heart, but he wants you to know him for your desires to be his desires.

You want your prayers answered? Then pray in God's wheelhouse. You pray the things that Jesus wants, he's going to come through on those things. If you're just after your own Corvette, not so sure that's going to work out.

So I want to pray what God desires. I want to have him change my heart. But let's look at that word delight. That word delight means intimate joy.

Intimate joy. And I want to quote Pastor Mike on joy is a soul deep happiness. That's a soul deep happiness.

[18:22] Intimate joy. But you might ask yourself, well, Carl, you know, can I really have joy in the midst of this painful trial? In the midst of wickedness.

And I've had some folks ask me that. I've had some folks my age ask me that. And I was a little surprised. But I get it. And if you look at James 1, James 1, verse 2, it says, count it all joy when you face trials of many kinds.

joy. And the key to that is to count or consider. Consider it all joy when you face trials of many kinds.

You can consider it all joy when you follow it down to verse 4. It says, because you are made perfect and complete, not lacking anything. So you're made like Christ.

I count it joy because I'm made like Christ. When I see what Christ is doing in my heart in this wicked trial, then it's joy.

[19:27] But there's effort. That count, that consider, that means that's a mindful act of effort. I'm choosing. And I choose because I'm focused on God's faithfulness.

What he's doing in my heart. Rob prayed that we would be transformed today. Matt prayed that we would be transformed today. If we're just here to listen to a good sermon and get some good knowledge, well, you're going to miss out.

It's about heart change. Do I just want to get through a situation? Yeah. Do I just want to avoid a situation?

Yeah. Or do I really want God to change me in it? Oh, yes, Lord, but help me because I'm so afraid. I'm so anxious. I fear.

I fret. This next one is commit. Trust, delight, commit. Three incredible words that focus on the Lord. And this word commit in the Hebrew, not that I'm a scholar, but I just plagiarize about Hebrew.

[20:39] This word commit means to roll a heavy burden onto, like rolling a big rock. you're rolling a heavy burden onto the Lord. When you commit your way to the Lord, you're rolling your heavy burden onto the Lord.

You're not just doing it on your own, which is my tendency. I just want to do life on my own. I got this guy. I don't need to check out that YouTube guy. I know how to do this. I want to do it on my own. All of the burdens, I just want to shoulder it, do it in my own strength. God wants me to commit, roll my burden onto him. My wife said, it's not like you're getting rid of all the burden, honey. Sometimes you're taking that yoke. I said, that's true. That's right. God wants to yoke with us. Now, he's helping me carry that burden. I'm still rolling a good chunk onto him instead of taking it on myself.

I can commit because he is faithful. he won't forsake me. I can take refuge in him. Then it gets into be still, wait.

[ 21 : 47 ] We struggle with that. Be still. Fret not. Refrain from anger. But Carl, how do I know that the Lord is going to help me now?

I want help and hope now, not just when I die. And here's what I have been hearing for decades now. There's no guarantee God is going to help me with this.

Especially when you read wisdom literature, people, Psalms aren't definitive, Carl, and Proverbs aren't definitive either. You know, just good wisdom. There's no guarantee that Proverbs are going to happen.

I get that. You know, I can go through all the verses in my Bible, and I can add, but there's no guarantee. I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. But there's no guarantee you will. If you have the Holy Spirit, you're guaranteed eternal life, but there's no guarantee you have the Holy Spirit. I can do that with every single verse if you want to, but here's the point of wisdom literature. Wisdom literature takes your eyes off of yourself and puts back on God.

[ 22 : 53 ] That's the point of wisdom literature. So the argument of but there's no guarantee with wisdom literature, who's, where are my eyes fixed? Where do my eyes need to go?

There's no guarantee I'm looking at me. I'm looking at me. I'm looking at the wicked situation. I'm focused on me. I'm focused on the world. My eyes are not on the Lord.

The whole point of wisdom literature is to get us back to looking at the Lord. But let's look and see what Psalm 37 says. Let's not just take Carl's word for it, that there's hope here.

Let's look at Psalm 37 a little more. Go to verse 3. Dwell in the land and experience God's faithfulness. Well, that's this life.

That dwelling in the land is this life. Verse 13 the Lord laughs at the wicked for he knows their day is coming. That's an eternal perspective. So I have hope in this life and eternal.

[ 23 : 55 ] Verse 19 the righteous are not put to shame in evil times and will have an abundance in times of famine.

That's this life. Verse 26 because the righteous have hope in the Lord, they lend generously and his children are a blessing.

Again, parents, that's money. I prayed that my children would be a blessing or God would take them home early. I prayed that a lot during their teenage years. True confession.

But why does God show himself by delivering hope in this life? Again, his glory is at stake here. He wants to use you to be a witness.

I just don't see that all the Christians are broken, homeless, don't have a job because how inviting and exciting would that be to be a Christian?

[ 24 : 55 ] So God does want to give us hope in this life now for his glory. But there's no guarantee.

That's why we need wisdom literature to point us back to God. So you might think, okay, Carl, I heard you, but you know what? I have anxiety.

I have legitimate anxiety. I have fear, struggle with depression. I have lack of hope still. True confession, so do I. As a matter of fact, I think we all struggle with some form of anxiety to some degree, some more, but we're all in our hearts of tight stress.

We look to the wicked. We wonder if there's hope. We struggle. And so I would tell you that we need to fight. We need to fight like David. David said, I thank you, Lord, you prepared my hands for war.

So today, we need to fight with our hands right here. we need to pray. We need to pray and we need to take captive.

[ 26 : 12 ] That's how we fight. We fight by taking captive our thoughts. We want to be transformed. We want to feed on God's faithfulness.

So we've got to put that effort. We've got to count it. Joy. And you've got to spend that time in prayer. And you've got to fight. Well, I want to just look forward now to the Lord. What does Psalm 37 have to do with Christ and the cross? Because we want to look at things always in light of the cross. And I want to just review the story you guys know in John 11 with Martha.

This is the story of Lazarus dying. And Martha sends word to Jesus, hey, your friend Lazarus, he's dying. And Jesus responds by staying a couple more days.

And he tells his disciples, Lazarus is sleeping. Oh, Lord, if he sleeps it's good, he'll get better. He's like, no, guys, Lazarus is dead and I'm glad.

[ 27 : 25 ] he says that. Lazarus is dead and I'm glad so the Lord will be glorified. I'm glad. That's strange for Jesus to say that.

So then Jesus gets going on his way. He stops short and Martha comes out to greet him. And if you remember, Martha comes out and she is complaining and blaming.

Oh, Lord, if you'd only been here, my brother would still be alive. She's complaining and blaming.

And then Jesus says to her, Martha, your brother's going to rise again.

Oh, I know he's going to rise again in the resurrection. I know there's hope in eternal life, but what I need him is now. Now, Jesus could have said, that's why I'm here.

I'm here to raise him from the dead. I'm here to give you your brother back now. But that's not what he says. He says, Martha, I am the resurrection.

[ 28 : 29 ] What you need is me. I know what your needs are. I know that your social and economic needs are based in your brother because you're a single woman and I know that's a big need right now.

But what you really need is me. I am the resurrection. I am faithful. I won't forsake you. Take refuge in me.

Martha doesn't get it. So what does she do? She goes and she gets Mary. So she lies to Mary. Hey, the teacher is asking for you. So she's a blamer, complainer, now she's a liar. Why is she sending Mary?

She's sending Mary because Mary is the favored one. Maybe she can get Jesus to do it. She's the one who sat at Jesus' feet while she was doing dishes. Jesus wanted to make her come in. So she's that favored one.

So now she's a manipulator. Liar, complainer, blamer, manipulator. So off Mary goes, says the same thing, oh Lord, if you'd have been here.

[ 29 : 25 ] So then Jesus says, take me there. Now, just to show you that God cares about the now. You all know the shortest verse in the Bible.

I learned this when I was like four. Jesus wept. John 11 verse 35. Jesus cries. Wait a minute. Didn't you just say Lazarus is dead and you're glad and now you're crying about it?

I don't get you. I just don't understand you. How are you God and man at the same time? I don't know. He cries. And he brings Lazarus back.

But what we need is him. He's a resurrection. He is faithful. He will not forsake us.

We take refuge in him. There is hope now. There is hope in eternal life and there's hope now. And Pastor Mike will also say John 17 verse 3 says this is eternal life that you may know him.

[ 30 : 27 ] that we know him. What we need is Jesus. We need more of him. The Lord is faithful.

He will not forsake you because we take refuge in him. And it counts Lee that is struggling. Not struggling now I guess. He was struggling in his marriage not long ago.

Deeply struggling. Big pornography problem. Really obsessed. And he really needed to be delivered. It was impacting his marriage.

His wife was about to leave him. And he's doing well. And he sent this text to me. He said Carl God is really delivering me but deliverance isn't the goal.

He is. I thought wow I need to quote that. I'm going to plagiarize that. That is so good. I wish I would have said that. Deliverance isn't the goal. He is.

[ 31 : 28 ] Now I want to go back to just two other people in the Old Testament. Job for a moment. And you guys know about Job. Bad things happen to Job. A lot of wicked.

The wicked destroy his crops. They take his money, his animals, and all that stuff. He loses ten of his kids. All ten. And he is really in a bad place.

And then you get to the end. Job 42 verse 5. And he says I heard about you God but now my eyes have seen you. He's saying all this was worth it.

All this was worth it. Now we could just stop right there. Full stop. End of Job. And Job would have been completely happy. But then it goes on and you find out that he gets blessed.

And he gets back his wealth and he gets ten more kids. And he even gets three daughters. It calls out the daughters. He's so blessed that it calls out the ladies. And normally it doesn't call it the ladies. But it's calling out the ladies. And one of them is Jemima which is where we get Aunt Jemima syrup.

[ 32 : 32 ] So praise God for that. Three ladies. He gets everything back but he didn't have to. It could have full stopped right there.

But maybe you're still not convinced. I want to go back to what a story David would be very familiar with. when he wrote this psalm and that was Hagar. And you might remember Hagar was Sarah's servant.

Sarah was married to Abraham. Okay. Abraham, father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had father Abraham. Don't tempt me. We will do it. Abraham.

And Abraham has Sarah. And Sarah of course, she gets a bit anxious. And like, you know what, maybe you should sleep with my maidservant and that's where we'll have a son.

So Hagar ends up sleeping with Abraham. Now, first off, I've got to say, who names their daughter Hagar? Okay? Sounds like a Viking.

[ 33 : 31 ] Guys, don't do that. It's just not right. I don't know. So Hagar, she gets pregnant and then she now despises her mistress, Sarah.

She's got an attitude. And then Sarah starts to mistreat her. Imagine that. Couldn't see that drama coming, huh? So Hagar runs away.

She runs away and she is in the desert. She's at an oasis. There's some water there. And she is miserable because she's been treated wickedly by Sarah.

And God speaks to her. And he says, Hagar, where are you going? Where'd you come from? Oh, I'm being mistreated. Hagar, don't worry.

I want you to go right back in there because I am going to bless you. Your son is also going to be a son of many nations. He is going to be a great man in many nations.

[ 34 : 38 ] But he's going to be a wild donkey of a man. He may even join the Navy because he's a bit donkey-ish. But I'm going to bless you. And she gladly goes back into that situation.

She names God the God who sees me, Jehovah Rapha. The God who sees me because God talked to her. did anything change with Sarah?

Nothing changed but everything changes because she has been with God. He is enough. He spoke to her, showed her, he is faithful.

He wouldn't forsake her. She would take refuge in him. Nothing changed but everything changed. There was hope here for her right now.

and she goes back into that situation. She had hope. Now, there's hope for you. There are two types of people.

[ 35 : 37 ] There's the person who needs Jesus and there's the person who needs more of Jesus. If you don't know Jesus and you don't know the hope that I'm talking about, then after service I will be up here and I would love to talk to you.

Or if you're still struggling with hope right now, I will be up here and we'll pray. I want to go back to looking at the trust, delight, and commit.

Ephesians 4.22 and 24 talk about putting off the old self and putting on the new self. So, do not fret, but trust.

Do not be envious, but delight, intimate joy. Do not be angry, but commit, roll that burden onto the Lord.

I think your conclusion for today is verse 25 again. I was young and now I am old and I'm telling you I have never seen the righteous forsaken or the children begging bread.

[ 36 : 45 ] They always lend freely and their children are a blessing. That's the purpose of old people. we are to remind you that God is faithful and we have seen it.

And Rob Buttermer encouraged me to put up this slide so you can put up this next slide. And this Brad Allen will appreciate this because this is a nice graph of function.

this is a curve. This is actually an exponential curve. If you know anything about exponential curves. And this graph for those who are going to have to listen to this on podcast is a graph of my perception of God's faithfulness.

And on the vertical side of the graph is God's faithfulness and then on the bottom the horizontal part of the graph is Carl's mustard seed faith which is just incremental.

It's the same distance every single time. But you'll notice that my perception of God's faithfulness actually grows. And his faithfulness is more and more even though my mustard seed stays the same.

[ 37 : 58 ] Now in all reality his faithfulness is really huge. But I have to learn this as I get older. I start to see just how faithful he is. And I actually have 31 and there's a couple more that I was thinking of this morning even I just didn't call out for the earth.

There are 31 miracles that God has done in my life. And there are 28 of these that he actually said I'm going to do this.

I know you're in this situation Carl and I am going to take you through and I'm going to do this. So just watch. And he did this 28 times. So I'm just going to share a couple with you because I need to go back and remember God's faithfulness in my life.

We all need to go back and remember God's faithfulness and meditate on his faithfulness who he is. As soon as we start meditating on the wickedness of people that will take us down.

We'll just get destroyed by doing that. But we have to remember God is faithful and he won't forsake us. I'm counseling a young man that he just found out that his wife had an 18 month affair and he's crushed.

[ 39 : 16 ] It's Carl's ultimate betrayal. How can I ever look at her and love her again? And I shared with him the gospel, which he knew and he could see it and he was just excited to see what God was doing in his heart.

But then we talked again just two days ago and he was focused on all of the wickedness and he was in despair. We have to keep going back to God is faithful, who he is, all of his character. Because if I get caught off on this, even the strongest will be taken down. So I'll share with you the first one, number eight there.

That's where God first gave me, Psalm 37, almost four decades ago. I had just come from my now wife, her apartment, and she called me over.

She said, I'm sensing a need to break up. I know, right? Who would want to break up with all of this? I know, that's what you're thinking. I was thinking the same thing.

[ 40 : 26 ] I was just crushed in my spirit because I thought, God, this relationship has been focused on you. I just come out of a bad relationship and now this relationship is all about you.

We spend time in the word. You know, this relationship has been pure. And so I was crushed. But in the moment, I pulled the Jesus card on her. I said, let's just pray about it.

I figured that would get me 24 hours. So I go back to my room. I am devastated. I am crying. I am hurr. How can this happen? And it was right before finals.

You know, and the girlfriend previously had dumped me right before finals like, God, when we talk about this, it's finals, you know. And I open up my Bible and there's Psalm 37 verse 4.

Delight yourself in the Lord. He'll give you the desires of your heart. And the Lord just speaks to me. He's like, Carl, don't worry about this. You're going to marry her. And I'm like, are you not keeping up with the current events?

[ 41 : 25 ] She wants to break up right now. It's not like that. You know, I just don't believe that this is really you speaking to me. And so the phone rings and it's my prayer partner I hadn't talked to in about a month.

He's like, Carl, I got a message from God and a verse. I'm like, no way. Psalm 37 4. I thought, that's incredible. No one's going to believe this.

So I start writing it down. And I write it down on this piece of paper and I stick it in this envelope. And you can carbon date this. It'll tell you it's about 40 years old. And it just was the promise.

He said, now you can't tell Christy. I'm like, well, how is this going to work out? I said, well, I don't know. You'll figure it out. So the next day, you know, I just told her, like, hey, God told me this is going to work out and I'm going to make some changes.

And I pulled this out on the night before we got married and I told my groomsman, this is what God did. He wanted to break up. She wanted to break up with me and God said, don't worry about it.

[ 42 : 24 ] You're going to end up marrying her. Now, you might say, that's just a coincidence. Carl, everybody gets a phone call like that with the exact verse and gets to tell you something like God's going to marry you. So, okay, you don't believe that.

I'll just jump to the end. The last one there just happened. God, we ended up leaving a lot of wickedness there.

And it was tragic and painful. And yet, I wouldn't change any of it. Because what God did in my heart, he showed himself faithful, that he wouldn't forsake us because we take refuge in him. And we had just left shepherd's fold and we moved in the house and I was having a little whiny Carl day like, oh, there's no hope. You know, we're just not going to be used again. I'm just going to become one of those old people who just plays golf and plays with their grandkids. You know, we're not going to ever do ministry anymore. It was terrible, God. And I could just hear God laughing.

[ 43 : 29 ] Like, are you serious? You think I've been faithful for this long in your life to do all these things to throw you under the bus now, Carl? Are you serious?

Like, okay, I know that sounds stupid. Now that I say that out loud, God, I know that sounds stupid. I certainly don't want to admit something embarrassing like this in front of all the shoreline. And I'm like, okay, God.

And so now God is showing himself faithful that, yes, he's going to use us. Because there's hope. He wants to do things.

And, yeah, there are some really painful ones in there that I'd love to talk with you about and share. And we can do that. sometime you want to talk with me. But God is faithful. He is not going to forsake you because we take refuge in him. Let's pray. Lord, I ask for your spirit to move in our hearts.

[ 44 : 31 ] We need hope. We need hope today and we need you because you are the resurrection and we just need more of you, God.

help us to embrace you and not look at our hopeless situation but to look to you who is hope. In Jesus' name, amen.