

Psalm 27

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Preacher: Ray Sims

[0:00] Of David. One thing I ask from the Lord.

This only do I seek. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. To gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

For in the day of trouble, he will help keep me safe in his dwelling. He will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.

Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me. At his sacred tent, I will sacrifice with shouts of joy. I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hear my voice when I call, Lord. Be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, seek his face. Your face, Lord, I will seek.

[1:20] Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger. You have been my helper. Do not reject or forsake me, God my savior.

Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. Teach me your way, Lord. Lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not hand me over to the desire of my foes.

For false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations. I remain confident of this. I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord. Be strong. Take heart and wait for the Lord. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Thanks, Steve.

Let's pray, shall we? Father, we do thank you for your illuminating and precious word.

[2:20] We thank you, Lord, for this psalm, Psalm 27. And we pray that as I speak, that my words be clear. And that, Father, by your spirit, as we've been singing in that last song, you would illuminate us and show us what you want us to see tonight.

We pray that we would have ears to hear and hearts to learn from you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Question for you.

Where do you turn when you're in trouble? When you're in deep trouble? When perhaps you fear the worst is going to happen? Or perhaps it already has and you're just fearing how it's all going to play out.

Well, David in this psalm is in real deep trouble. And as Steve encouraged us this morning, I'd encourage you to keep your Bibles open. And as you scan through it, you'll see some of the opposition he faced.

In verse, his enemies are evident throughout the psalm. In verse 2, he describes his enemies like wild animals seeking to devour him. David sure is in deep trouble.

[3:32] So where does he turn? If we were to sum up Psalm 27 in one sentence, as I'm encouraged to do very often, and I find very difficult, it would be this.

See if you can do it better than this. David seeks refuge from his enemies in the presence of the Lord. David seeks refuge from his enemies in the presence of the Lord.

That's what's going on in this psalm. David has many enemies and he's seeking refuge. The Lord is God. As you read through, you'll see it's a very personal psalm.

You can see that by the amount of times my, I and me are mentioned. But it's included in the psalms in the Israelite songbook, so that God's people of all generations may be encouraged to trust in God with their troubles and to seek his face.

We have a pattern here of how David seeks refuge in God. And I wonder if you would just hear me out and follow through with me. What does he do? He expresses his confidence in God and he

prays.

[4:43] But how does he do it? The psalm seems to break naturally into four sections. Verses 1-3, he trusts that the Lord will deliver him. Verses 4-6, he desires to live in the Lord's presence.

Verses 7-12, he prays seeking the Lord. And then David has his own conclusion to the psalm. In verses 13 and 14, he confidently waits for the Lord.

Lucy was advising that I didn't have much to say, that I read the psalm through twice and that would be okay. So Steve's already read it once and I'm going to read it through again, but not all. I'm going to read it in sections.

As we cover each section, I'll read through those verses. So verses 1-3, he trusts in the Lord that the Lord will deliver. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.

[5:50] Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear. Though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. Well, verse 1, the Lord is my light and my salvation, is very familiar to us.

So I'd like us to take a moment to reflect on those truths and let them soak in. David reminds himself that it is the Lord who is his light and his salvation and refuge.

He says, the Lord is my light and my salvation. The Lord is the stronghold of my life. He rejoices that the Lord is these things to him personally, when he says the Lord is my light, is my light, my salvation, and the Lord is the stronghold of my life.

So David's testimony in short here is that the Lord is for him light, salvation and a stronghold. And therefore he'll fear no one.

We've been reading Romans, haven't we, in the morning. And Romans 8, 31, if God is for us, who can be against us, is perhaps the New Testament version of this.

[7:07] I will not fear. God is for me. Who can be against me? He then sets out two scenarios. See if you can see them there in the next couple of verses.

And they're not far-fetched scenarios. They're realities in his day-to-day life. He says, when the wicked advance against me, it is they who will stumble and fall.

Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear. He could be reflecting on two occasions, you may recall in your mind, when Saul was hunting him down, or more than, there were several occasions when Saul was hunting him, of course.

And then when Absalom went into Jerusalem and he had to flee. But we're not told that that's what it is, so it may not be that. But we do know that his confidence that whoever comes against him, whatever's thrown at him, is safe because the Lord is his light, his salvation, and his stronghold. And it's interesting, isn't it, that we're not told the detail about his enemies. We're told what they were like. We're not told of what the situation was. And I wonder whether that's because in applying this psalm to ourselves, we can say this true of ourselves.

[8:28] If David had said, when, you know, because Saul is hunting me down, then I know the Lord is my light and my salvation. We might tend to ignore that. But because it's so general, we can apply this psalm to ourselves and see the Lord as our light, our salvation, and our stronghold.

And living this side of the cross of Jesus, we know, of course, from the Gospels that Jesus fulfills his very things. He is our light. John 8, 12, he says, I'm the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Jesus is the Lord who is our salvation. Not just provide salvation, not just will give us salvation when we ask for it, but he is himself our salvation with what he's done on the cross.

Jesus is our stronghold, firstly from the wrath of God that we deserve for our sin, but then from every situation then we go on to face.

He is our stronghold. He is our refuge. So as David confidently reminds himself of the deliverance of the Lord, you and I should have even more confidence because we see the Father providing for us in Jesus.

[9:54] So our question is, what difficult situations are you facing at present? And I know we all face them of various grades and various types.

Where do you see the Lord, you need the Lord as your light, your salvation and your stronghold? Is it relationships that aren't quite going as you'd hoped or as they should be?

Is it finances that you're struggling with? Or is it an uncertain future? You literally don't know what tomorrow will bring. But trust him and do not fear.

He is able. He is your light, your salvation and your stronghold. So how does David find refuge? He trusts the Lord to deliver him, but he also knows the refuge he needs is found in one place and that is God's presence.

Let's read verses four to six. One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

[11:14] For in the day of trouble, he will keep me safe in his dwelling. He will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me.

At his sacred tent, I will sacrifice with shouts of joy. I will sing and make music to the Lord. Now for me, there's a strange thing going on here in verses four and five.

David refers to the house of the Lord, the temple, temple, and his sacred tent. But in David's time, David's day, the temple hadn't been built.

So where does he get the house of the Lord from and where does he get the temple from? These are future things. But they did have a tent, of course. The temple is pointing forward to Jesus that we'll see in just a minute.

But David's immediate understanding was all three places, temple, house, tent, was where God would meet with his people.

[12:20] David's overriding desire above everything else was to meet with God and to live in God's presence. And it's through that, in verse five, he finds refuge.

So he has one thing he wants, one overriding desire, but in true preacher fashion, he expresses it in three words.

And here they are. It's to dwell or live in the presence of the Lord, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord, and to seek God. Different ways of saying he just wants to dwell in God's presence.

The language of these verses is, for me, beautiful. It's quite serious and uncompromising. He doesn't just want to glance at the Lord, look at the Lord occasionally, but he wants to gaze.

To gaze takes time. It involves not just your eyes, but it involves your emotions. It moves you. It engages you.

[13:26] You've probably all been on holiday at some point and you've seen a beautiful sunset or you've seen a majestic mountain range and you just have to stop and gaze.

There's not many of us that say, oh yeah, some mountains, oh yeah, sunset. No, it engages us. We stand and we gaze. That's David's desire here, to stand and gaze to enjoy the magnificence, the glory.

But why is he gazing? In the next line it says, to enjoy the beauty of the Lord. He's gazing at the beauty of the Lord. So gazing on the beauty of the Lord seems to be for him in these troubles he's going through, this persecution he's facing, it seems to be a reset of some sort.

Now he sees that in what God does for him and who indeed God is for him. I've just lost my place. Yeah. He sees in those things that God is his refuge, his vindication over his enemies and at the end of verse 6 his heart responds in joyful worship.

[14:46] most of us are living in London and whether we're living in London or not we have very busy lives and it is difficult to take time to gaze.

Not an awful lot to gaze at in the streets around here but gazing at the Lord is what we need to do. Take time in his presence to marvel at his beauty, his character, his awesomeness.

When we realise that he's our then we realise he's our safety and refuge because we see God as far greater, far bigger than our problems.

If we don't take time in the presence of the Lord to look at who he is our problems just take the first point and we don't see him as the Lord over those problems.

So we noted just earlier David's reference to the temple also points into Jesus but I'd just like to say that we see this pointed out by Jesus himself in the Gospels around 600 years after David Jesus said this to the Pharisees I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.

[16:05] That's Matthew 12 6 and then John 2 19 he says destroy this temple again he's speaking to the Pharisees destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.

We know he was talking about his own body. Christ is our temple he is the place now where you and I meet God. In him we see the father through him we gaze at the beauty of the Lord. In him we are kept safe and set high upon a rock. So without knowing it it's crazy isn't it without knowing it David pointed to Jesus who is the greatest and clearest expression of the Lord and of the place where we meet God.

God. So this is David's desire but it was not fully his experience. If we read the verses following we see that he longs for this but he's praying earnestly for it.

He calls out in prayer. Verses 7 to 12 he prays seeking the Lord and see as I read this if you can detect a change in tone.

[17:17] Hear my voice when I call Lord. Be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you seek his face.

Your face Lord I will seek. Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger. You have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me God my saviour.

Though my father and mother forsake me the Lord will receive me. Teach me your way O Lord.

Lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.

Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes. The false witnesses rise up against me spouting malicious accusations. So there's a shift in tone if you can see that in these verses.

A jolt from the joyful confidence I know the Lord as my rock, my redeemer, my salvation, my light to pleading in verse seven.

[18:23] Hear my voice when I call Lord. Verse nine, do not hide your face from me. Verse seven, he has this sense of unworthiness come over him.

Be merciful to me and answer me. And then when he gets to verse 10, his confidence comes back again. Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

So central to this section is David's desire to seek God now described as seeking his face.

We need to just pause a little here. If you're reading the NIV, which most of us are, it says, my heart says of you, seek his face, your face Lord, I will seek.

The ESV is better translated, and I'll try and show you the difference. The ESV says, you have said, seek my face, my heart says to you, your face Lord, do I seek.

[19:26] Let me read that again. You have said, seek my face, my heart says to you, your face Lord, do I seek. This puts the phrase seek my face as a command from God, because he says, you have said.

seek my face. You have said, seek my face. And the word seek here is plural, more than one person.

So David, God here is given a command to David and David's people, and I think to us as well. It's a plural.

plural. Why does this language matter? It matters because it shows us that the initiative comes from God.

If God has made the first move before we seek his face, God has said to us, seek my face. It is God who himself calls us into deeper communion.

[20:34] communion. That's in itself beautiful. And David responds from the heart, your face, Lord, do I seek? And when God says to us, seek my face, as he does here in the pages of scripture, that should be our answer too, shouldn't it?

Your face, Lord, do I seek? Verse 11 changes tone slightly again. And in the face of his oppressors, foes, false witnesses and accusers, David's prayer is to seek the Lord's face and be taught the Lord's way.

Verse 11, teach me your way, Lord. David's enemies are accusing him. According to these verses, they're telling lies about him. So he needs God's wisdom how to respond to them, how to respond in a godly way.

And this is all part of an intimate walk with the Lord. It's all part of living our Christian lives before him, but we need him to show us his way so that when people oppose us, people rub us up the wrong way or slander us in some way, that we respond, the Lord teaches us his way, that we may respond in a godly way.

He expresses the desire here to walk rightly with God, even when under pressure from the vilest of enemies in his case. How do we respond to problems and opposition?

[22:08] What will we ask God for in those times of stress? David can only face the onslaught by knowing God's presence firstly, and then learning God's way.

So we're nearly at the end, we're nearly at David's conclusion, but what we've seen is that he trusts that the Lord will deliver him. His desire was to be with the Lord, and he prayed seeking the Lord. Now briefly we see he confidently waits for the Lord. Verses 13 and 14, I remain confident of this, I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart, and wait for the Lord. So David may not see all of his problems solved in this life, but what he does know, what he is confident about, is that he will experience the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

So though he may have problems, as he seeks God's face, as he learns to walk with him, he will know the goodness of the Lord. There's an expectancy here that through the opposition, of enemies and the trials of his life, he will experience what he most desires, the refuge and close communion with the Lord.

[23:36] So our problems, our issues, things that keep us awake at night, if we take refuge in the Lord, seek his face, gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, those very problems will be a source of blessing to us as we experience God's help and God's presence in a greater way.

So he tells himself and he tells you and I as we read this psalm, be strong, take heart and wait for the Lord.

You don't see answers now, wait for the Lord. He is able, he will deliver, he is glorious, he will bless, wait for the Lord.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for those truths that you are glorious, you are great, you are worthy of our gaze, you are worthy of our worship.

Father, help us to do that and help us to see how Jesus is that fulfillment and how he draws us to you. he makes it possible. So as we gaze upon you this week, will you please help us to give thanks for our Lord Jesus Christ in his name.

[25:00] Amen. Amen.