

Fearless

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[0 : 00] Psalm 27, Psalm 27, I'll read it out loud, all 14 verses.

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 evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Do an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear.

Do a war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple.

For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble. He will conceal me under the cover of His tent. He will lift me high upon a rock.

[1 : 20] And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me. And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing and make a melody to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me. You have said, seek my face. My heart says to you, your face, Lord, do I seek.

Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger. O you who have been my help, cast me not off.

Forsake me not, O God of my salvation. For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in. Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

Give me not up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me. And they breathe out violence. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

[2 : 24] Wait for the Lord. Be strong. And let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord. I don't think any of us can relate to this personally, but there's probably few things in life that strike more fear into people's hearts than, you know, being in war and facing an enemy line, right?

So it's, I think of a scene, I think it's the beginning of Return of the King in Lord of the Rings, right? There's the army of elves and men are in alliance and they're in Helms' Deep.

They're lined up against the army of orcs, right? And the orcs are all being, you know, rowdy and trying to be intimidating, pounding their chests. And then there's this one old man, an archer, right? He's looking at the orcs and he's so scared, you know, he's shaking in his boots and his knees are knocking. And he's so scared, in fact, he can't even hold on to his bowstring.

So he accidentally lets go of one arrow and then it goes into, it kills one of the orcs. And inadvertently starts the war before his commander's call.

[3 : 42] And so, like, I mean, I could kind of try to picture myself in that man's shoes, right? It's the kind of facing enemy lines, encamped. Your enemy encamped against you. You're hopelessly outnumbered.

Most likely when you start to march, you're marching into your death. And so that's a fearful prospect. And David is very familiar with that because he was a man of war, right? And so even with that kind of context in mind, he writes that he can have courage because of his trust in the Lord. And so the main point of this psalm he's teaching us is that those who seek the face of the Lord will be fearless in the face of life's troubles. Those who seek the face of the Lord will be fearless in the face of life's troubles.

And so in verses 1 to 6, he tells us about how faith expels fear. And then in verses 7 to 14, he tells about how faith impels prayer. So he expels fear and impels prayer.

So if you read verse 1 with me first, how faith expels fear. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life.

[4 : 48] Of whom shall I be afraid? So there's three ways in which God's described in this verse. So three nouns. He says, first, the Lord is light. And then secondly, he's salvation.

And then thirdly, he's a stronghold, right? And they both convey a powerful truth. So first, if you think about God as light, I mean, if you think about light and how it interacts with darkness, right? When you turn on the light switch in a dark room or you shine a flashlight into a dark corner of the room, you don't see light struggling with darkness, right? Just there's light and then all the poof, the darkness is gone, right?

It's just the light overpowers the darkness. The light, you know, just overcomes the darkness. It's immediate and automatic, right? That's not something that you even think about.

In a similar way, the Lord is light. He drives out the darkness. And then secondly, he says he's salvation. This also means, in this context especially, he probably refers to military victory.

[5 : 47] Victory, salvation, similar word. And so, you know, when the Lord is your salvation, the Lord is our victory, there's no, you know, there's no odds of winning or odds of the chance of victory because the victory is assured, right?

The Lord, if the Lord is our salvation, then victory is guaranteed for whoever is fighting. There we have. Nothing is left to chance. And then thirdly, the Lord is the stronghold, which refers to a military fortress.

So he provides safety and refuge from the enemy's attacks. And if this is the case, the Lord is a light, the salvation, and the stronghold of our life, then he asks, of whom shall I be afraid?

And so that's why faith that David has in God expels his fear. So he writes about that in verses 2 to 3. When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

Do an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Do war arise against me, yet I will be confident. Right? So he's likening his enemies, his adversaries, to wild beasts who are seeking to devour his flesh, to eat up his flesh.

[6 : 59] Yet, even when they do that, it's they who stumble and fall apart. And so he says he will be confident and you will not have fear. And I want you guys to think about this in a concrete sense just because, like, think about the things that you're afraid of.

I mean, think about the things that you fear in your daily life. I mean, for David, this was a very concrete thing. You know, in the face of an army that's trying to kill him, in the face of enemies that's trying to devour him, he could have, he could be fearless.

So that's something that can serve us and help us as well. And the reason why David is able to maintain that confidence and faith is because his face is set on the Lord. And his face is not set on the magnitude of his enemies, but on the magnitude of his God.

So it says in verse 4, He says he asks for one thing.

He doesn't ask for a few things or many things. And this is because, as Deuteronomy 6, verse 4 says, It says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

[8 : 07] Right? And because there's only one God who commands our allegiance, there's really only one thing that we ought to seek after. So David's saying that because of that, he seeks after one thing.

And he acknowledged that there is nothing better than dwelling in the house of the Lord. And this prayer doesn't mean that he wanted to be like a temple servant, just being in the physical temple all the time.

But he's saying that in all his life, he wanted to live, you know, in God's presence. So it's his longing to be with him. And the description is so beautiful, right?

It's just very personal and intimate. If you look at it, the verse 4, To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. So he wishes to see God and talk to him, right?

So to inquire of him and talk to him. And he wants to see him, to gaze upon his beauty. And if David, who doesn't even have the fullness of the Spirit, and who doesn't even know of Jesus becoming incarnate, can relate to God in this intimate and personal way, then how much more can we, as people who have the Spirit of God, and who have seen, who have witnesses of Jesus, the fact that God came in flesh to dwell in our midst, then how much more can we relate to God in intimacy and personal relationship?

[9 : 27] And because of this setting his face on God that David does, we see in verses 4 to 5 his confidence.

Oh, verses 5 to 6, rather. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble. He will conceal me under the cover of his tent. He will lift me high upon a rock. And my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me.

And I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing and make melody to the Lord. I mean, the words are all very similar, right? It's hide, shelter, conceal, cover.

It's all tent. They all convey a similar idea. So the Lord is like a refuge that we seek. So, I mean, when you're caught unexpectedly in a torrent of rain, right?

And so you run for cover somewhere. You finally find cover somewhere. And then there's silence. And you find relief. And then that's the kind of sense.

[10 : 28] He hides us. He covers us. He is our refuge. He is our shelter. And the idea of him lifting us high upon a rock also communicates the idea of an impregnable fortress.

Something that's unassailable. We're saved from the enemy's attacks. And because of this, because the Lord is this shelter for us, then the faith that we have in him expels any fear.

So we can be fearless when we face our circumstances. And if faith in God enables him to be fearless, then it's his faith also that impels him to prayer.

He encourages us to continue to seek God's face in prayer. So we see that in verses 7 to 9. Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud. Be gracious to me and answer me. You have said, seek my face.

My heart says to you, your face, Lord, do I seek. Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger. O you who have been my help. Cast me not off.

[11 : 31] Forsake me not. O God of salvation. So sometimes I think for modern day, you know, believers, like often the, we can be tempted to doubt whether or not God can help us, right, in our situations.

Like when we face difficulties, suffering, or things that instill fear in our hearts, we doubt whether God can help us, right? But for David, it's not a question of whether or not God can do it.

For him, it's entirely a question of whether he will, right? So he asks, Lord, your face, don't turn your face from me. Because if I know that you are capable and you can deliver me, just don't turn your face from me.

And he recognizes that God, you know, showing him, helping him is a function of his grace, not something that he can feel entitled to. That's why he says, be gracious to me and answer me, right?

And there's an emphasis here on seeking him, right? The word seek, which we saw in verse 4, occurs two more times here in verse 8. So we are not to be passive recipients of God's help, but we're supposed to be active seekers of God.

[12 : 37] He doesn't want us to be resigned to a mediocre life characterized by occasional glimpses and experiences of God. But he wants us to seek his face like David, to gaze upon his beauty, to inquire of him.

And David cannot resign himself to the possibility of God's absence. So he says in verse 10, I mean, this may mean that he was literally forsaken by his parents, perhaps during the time when he was fleeing from Saul.

But it might also just mean that as a king, as king of, you know, Israel, you know, he has, he really no longer has parents because Israel's kings were considered to have God as their father.

They were supposed to be a son of God, right? In a way. And so in that sense, he can't rely on his earthly parents for his help. So in that sense, he's been forsaken by them. And God is his only help.

He's the only one he can turn to. And that's why he cries out to me, for my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in. And I think it's helpful for us to ask, you know, when we're facing crises in our lives, you know, when we're facing problems, you know, what's our first impulse?

[13 : 58] What do we turn to? We all probably have either something or someone that we turn to. And is that someone, someone other than God himself, right?

And because he's saying that the relationship that David has with him is more intimate than even that paternal relationship. Are we, do we turn first to our parents? Do we turn first to our spouses?

Do we turn first to our siblings? Or do we turn first to the Lord for help when we face crises? And David does that. And that's where he finds his confidence. And when he expresses faith in the Lord this way and prays to him, that's when he's assured again in verses 11 to 12 of deliverance.

Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me and they breathe out violence.

And then he finishes, he concludes the psalm by affirming his confidence and then again, verses 13 to 40, his faith in him. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

[15:02] Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord. So the language in this verse is heavily indebted to Deuteronomy 31, 7 to 8.

That's where Moses appoints Joshua to take over for him in finishing the conquest of the promised land. And then he encourages Joshua with these words, be strong and courageous.

Both of those words are found here in this verse. For you shall go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the Lord who goes before you.

He will be with you. He will not leave you or forsake you. Again, that word is found here. Do not fear or be dismayed. Right? So the reason why Moses can exhort Joshua to be strong and courageous, to not fear, is because the Lord will not forsake him or leave him.

And so it's in the same way that those who seek the face of the Lord, who have faith in his presence, his help, they are the ones who are fearless in the face of life's troubles. And so, and because, and for David, I mean, this is not an assured thing.

[16:12] Right? Because he knows that he's sinful. And that's why he says in verse 7, Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me. God, he cries out for God's grace because he knows that his faith can waver and he, you know, he's not sinless and does not deserve God's help and constant presence, abiding presence.

But for us, for people whom, for whom Jesus paid the penalty of sin, people who have been adopted into his family and who have the spirit of God, we can say, as it says in Ephesians 1, 13 to 14, In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.

Right? The word salvation occurred here in verse 9 and it occurred in verse 1. And even though it refers in this context to military victory, it points to, it foreshadows our ultimate salvation through Jesus.

And in that regard, the promise that God has, the promise that God makes to us is unconditional and categorical. Right? 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 it comes to our salvation, our ultimate fate in God, we can have complete confidence because he does promise to work out all things for the good of those who love him.

[17:40] And that good, that purpose, is ultimately our salvation. So then we can turn to God and seek his face knowing that we will not be disappointed, knowing that we have nothing to fear as we face life's troubles.

So... So... So... So...