

Fearless Faith

Psalm 27

For King David to write these words, it was no small thing. These were not abstract concepts for him. These were very real, **very concrete dangers**.

- **Evildoers** assailed him - often from within his own family!
- **Adversaries** and foes assaulted him - sometimes throwing a spear at him from across the dining room.
- **Armies** encamped against him - real battle lines drawn up with real face painted enemies shouting their war cries, pounding sword against shield.
- **War** arose against him - with real arrows striking his shield, real spears being hurled at him.

“Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.” Psalm 27:3

How could David write those words? How could he MEAN those words? Where does that kind of fearless confidence come from? **Psalm 27 shows us it comes from KNOWING GOD.** We will see three exhortations from this great Psalm built around five wonderful truths about God. If we know God as David did we will trust God as David did.

That is our first exhortation today:

1. Be **Confident** in the Lord - the One who **Saves**

“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?” Psalm 27:1

Again, ***salvation for David was not an abstract theological concept.*** It was life and death. He faced Goliath as a young teenager - 15, 16 years old. Putting that small stone into his shepherd’s sling and swinging it around to throw at the huge Philistine was not an academic exercise. If he missed, the Giant was charging at him with a 20 pound spearhead mounted on a telephone pole length spear. Maybe he could dodge that spear, but then the 6 foot longsword would be swiping and lunging at him.

Darkness was not a few hours without air conditioning and airpods. Darkness was camping for months in caves, never sure when they would have to flee again, never sure when they might be boxed in and have to fight for their lives.

Enemies were all around him. Being King was a very dangerous vocation. Read 1 and 2 Kings. Lots of those guys got assassinated after just a few days or months - usually by an immediate family member.

So **where did David go for LIGHT?** Where did he find hope and comfort? Where did he find peace and security? The first word of this Psalm is YAHWEH - the covenant name of God. The answer for David's fears, the cure for his struggles was the LORD.

Can we say the same? Is the Lord YOUR LIGHT? Is He the One who gives you guidance and comfort? Is He your salvation? Is God the One you go to for help and rescue? Is He your stronghold? Is God the One you go to for comfort and security? Is He your resting place?

If we don't answer these questions QUICKLY the reason is that we don't yet KNOW GOD very well. **We hesitate because we have not really experienced God as the One who Saves.** Because that is who God is! He is the SAVING, redeeming, rescuing, protecting God!

For many of us, **salvation is an abstract concept** meaning forgiveness and access to eternal life. "Jesus saves," means he paid for my sins on the cross and gave me a ticket to heaven. Period. But Jesus saves means so much more than this! Yes, he paid for your sin and mine. Yes, He will bring us to heaven to be with Him forever. **But He also lives to intercede for us and to help us every minute of every day!** He is the One who Saves us from 1,000 troubles, 1,000 temptations, 1,000 struggles, 1,000 fears.

The Psalms can help us grow in this kind of confidence in the Lord because they help us to KNOW HIM as the Psalm-writers knew Him. The Lord IS the stronghold of your life - it's just a question of coming to know Him that way. Some of you have.

Some of you have been to hell and back. You've **buried a child**. You've felt the agony of death. You've faced that terrible enemy and been reduced to your last tiny thread of human endurance. And in that place of desperation you found the LORD to be your stronghold.

Some of you have been through the dark agony of **divorce**. You have felt that closest of all personal rejections. The person who promised to love and cherish and honor and protect you became your enemy and worked to tear you to pieces. But in that place of brokenhearted despair you found the Lord to be your light and your salvation.

Some of you have gone months and months **without a job**. You've been in the desert of financial emptiness. You've been without a dollar in your checking account and right up at the maximums on your credit cards. You've made that call to a credit card company asking for another \$1,000 and been told, "You need to reduce your credit usage before we can increase your credit limit." Hey, if I was able to reduce my credit usage I wouldn't be making this phone call! But in that dark valley of fear and desperation you met the Lord as your true provider, as your Good Shepherd who met your every need, every time.

I'm willing to be everyone here has experienced this in moments of crisis. The question for us is **whether we bring that confidence into our day to day lives**. Do we so know and trust in the Lord as the One who Saves that we are actually **WORRYING LESS** than we did a year ago? We are **PRAYING MORE** and trusting more and feeling greater peace even if our health is worse and our general situation is worse than it has been - because we KNOW GOD better. He IS our light and salvation. He IS our stronghold. We are secure in the Lord, what can mortal man do to us?

Our second exhortation:

2. Be **Committed** to the Lord - the One who **Fills**

"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." Psalm 27:4

Do you feel the force of those two words: **ONE THING**? Are we that single minded? Are we that wholehearted? If you were to ask God for only ONE THING is this what it would be? Or if we're honest we would have 100 things we would ask of Him before we got to this kind of a request...?

Look at **David's ONE THING** that he determined to seek after... to dwell in the house of the Lord. Now, as King, David couldn't actually move in to the Temple area. Remember, the Temple didn't yet exist. David wanted to build it, but his son Solomon was the one who actually built it. So dwelling in the Lord's house meant for David the same thing it does for us - **to set our hearts and minds on Him** to the point that the Lord becomes our mental resting place.

Martin Luther called this kind of "practicing the presence of God" - "making your nest." We are like little birds, flitting about, so busy with our work. We grab a worm, bring it back for the babies. We pick up a twig, bring it back for the nest. We zoom and fly,

catching bugs. But in between all of our tasks, we come back to the nest. That is your mental resting place - your HOME.

What is your mental nest? What is your resting place - your default setting? Do you dwell in the house of the Lord? Ephesians 2 tells us that we have already been raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly places. In a spiritual sense the Christian already dwells in heaven with the Lord. Is that where our minds come back to? Do we set our minds on things about, not on earthly things?

David was committed to the Lord as the One who fills all things and who filled His heart and mind and life. In classic Hebrew style, David expands on what he means in the second half of this couplet:

2. Be **Committed** to the Lord - the One who **Fills**
"One thing have I asked for... to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple." Psalm 27:4

Oh, ***just to see the Lord*** - just to come before Him - just to be near Him - that would be enough! Because the Lord is not only the One who saves us and helps us, He is the One who fills us and satisfies our souls. He is the All-Sufficient One who meets all of our needs according to His glorious riches.

Do you know Jesus that way? We may know the verse **Ephesians 4:10** that Jesus descended so he could "ascend above all the heavens in order to fill all things," but do we know Jesus as the One who fills US and our world?

For David, the Temple was still a future hope - but when Solomon dedicated the Temple the glory of the Lord came down in blinding radiance and visibly filled the most holy place of the Temple. **Does the Holy Spirit fill YOU in that way?** Do you know His Shekinah Glory as the power and goodness and guidance of your day-to-day living?

God's Word is the bread of life. "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." Jesus said he didn't need food for 40 days, but He did need the Word of His Father. He depended on communion with the Father like we depend on food or oxygen.

Is God's Word the thing that fills us as it connects us with the Lord? Do we know the Holy Spirit as the spring of living water, flowing from inside our hearts? Or are we so busy

chasing other things, looking for that next little fix to quench the thirst that can never really be satisfied?

Psalm 27 calls us back to the ONE THING. God calls us to let go of our 100 little things in order to take hold of HIM as our One Thing. Do you remember that old movie from the '90s, *City Slickers*? Billy Crystal and two friends were having mid-life crises and went out to be cowboys to get some perspective. The old cowboy mentor pulled Billy aside and raised one finger, saying, "You know what the secret of life is? It's this." Billy said, "What, your finger?" "No," the old man said, "One thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and everything else [doesn't matter]." Billy of course wanted to know, "What is it? What's the one thing?" That, the old cowboy said, "Is what you gotta figure out."

David figured it out. To Know God. To see Him. To meet with Him. To be with Him. That was David's one thing. What is your one thing? Are you confident in the Lord as the One who saves you? Are you committed to the Lord as the One who fills you? One more exhortation from Psalm 27.

3. Call on the Lord - the One who Listens

"Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me!" Psalm 27:7

This is the **central verse** of this 14 verse Psalm. That is no accident. The Psalm hinges on a cry for help. It begins with a truth assertion - "The Lord IS my light and my salvation." And it ends with a promise and exhortation, "Be strong and take heart and WAIT for the Lord." And in the middle is this prayer.

How can you find God to be your light and your salvation? By calling on Him! How can you rest in God as the stronghold of your life? By crying out to Him. How can you wait on the Lord - be strong and take heart and wait on the Lord? By lifting up your voice to the One who can hear and can help!

Is the application really that simple? Yes. **We need to learn to pray.** To really pray. We need to learn what it means to cry aloud to God, to plead with Him to be gracious and to work on our behalf.

For David, this meant writing poetry. We have half of the Psalms because David spent time quiet with the Lord, pouring out his heart - and took the time to write some of his prayers down. Some of us like to journal - we like to process our feelings on paper. Some like to write poetry. Some like to write music. David was also a musician.

Some of you like to walk or run or swim when you pray. Some like to be outside. Others prefer a cool, quiet place inside. Some of us like to pray with other people. Others prefer to do most of your praying alone.

However you call on the Lord - lean into that. And know that HE IS the God who HEARS. He is always listening. In fact, look at verse 8!

3. **Call** on the Lord - the One who **Listens**

“You have said, ‘Seek my face.’ My heart says to you, ‘Your face, Lord, do I seek.’” Psalm 27:8

God has called us to seek His face. He INVITES us to call on Him - to come to Him. We wouldn't dare approach Him apart from this invitation. But because Jesus has opened the way into the most holy place through His blood sacrifice for us we can approach the throne of grace with confidence!

So we set our hearts to seek His face. David has already said this is his One Thing - to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord. To seek God's face is to set our hearts and minds to truly KNOW HIM. We can only know God through His Word and His Son. Scripture shows us the truth about God. But we see God most clearly when we look at the Son of God. We don't know what Jesus actually looked like. Probably not Jim Caviezel; he's a little too pretty and we know from Isaiah 53 that Jesus was not particularly pretty. But to seek His face is not to know what His human face looked like but to know His heart, to know His mind, to know His will, His desires. To Know Him.

We've seen just in this Psalm God is the One who saves, the One who fills, the One who listens. Two more.

3. **Call** on the Lord - the One who **Loves**

“O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!” Psalm 27:9

Is David actually worried that God would cast him aside? Well, yes and no. God did cast Saul aside. The first King of Israel was not faithful to the Lord, so the kingdom was torn from him and given to David. That had to be on David's mind throughout his reign. Especially when he had that whole thing with Bathsheba and Uriah, David must have expected the Lord to toss him out.

And, in a very real sense, **God did discipline David**. There were severe consequences for his sin - issues that came out with his sons that cost him very dearly and very personally. But God did not take the kingdom from David. And that is an important window for us to see the gospel.

Did David remain king and the kingdom get passed on to his son because David was so much better than Saul? No. It was not a beauty contest that David won; it was not a righteousness contest that David won. Both Saul and David were sinners - and arguably what David did was much worse than what Saul did. So why did Saul lose the kingdom and David didn't?

The answer is - GOD'S PROMISE. **God's promise to Saul was CONDITIONAL**, based on the Law. "Saul, if you obey the Law, I will bless you and prolong your reign. But if you break the Law I will punish you and take away your reign." That is the Old Covenant based on the Law. It is hard as a rock. The Law of Moses was chiseled into stone and if you broke that Law you could be killed with stones. The heavy stone of the Law fell on Saul when he disobeyed.

God's promise to David was UNCONDITIONAL, based on God's faithfulness, not David's righteousness. David wanted to build a temple for the Lord and God said, "No, I will build a house for you - a dynasty through which I will save the world." That was God's promise to bring the Messiah from the line of David. It was an unconditional promise that could not be changed by David's failure, Solomon's failure or any grandchild or great grandchild thereafter - including you and me.

What is YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD like? Is it like Saul? Do you feel like your relationship with God is based on your obedience to the Law? If you pray enough, read the Bible enough, give enough, serve enough then you think God will accept you? But if you neglect those areas, say something wrong, think something wrong, do something wrong you worry that God will reject you forever? Those feelings of "I have to perform to win God's favor" are OLD COVENANT feelings. That is trying to live under the Law of Moses or some other religious Law of your own creation. Maybe you're living under the Law of Mom and Dad, or the Law of some previous church. Do you feel the stone tablets hanging over your head waiting to crash down on you and crush you so God casts you off?

Listen to verse 10.

3. **Call** on the Lord - the One who **Loves**

“For my father and mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.” Psalm 27:10

David knew the UNCONDITIONAL grace and acceptance of God. David lived under GRACE not under LAW. But that didn't keep David from prayer, it freed him up to pray! Grace didn't make David lazy with worship, it propelled him to sing God's praises! Grace didn't make David compromise with his lifestyle, it moved him to live a holy and pure life - though it was far from a perfect life, if you study the details.

David knew that even the closest human family members will let you down. At different points in time, we know his brothers turned against him, apparently his own parents turned against him, at one point pretty much the entire nation of Israel turned against him, and he had to flee from Jerusalem.

But David knew the Lord would always be there - would always take him in. Nothing could change that UNCONDITIONAL LOVE of God. Do you know God's love this way? Nothing can separate you from that love once you've come to really know it in Christ.

JESUS fulfilled the Law for us. The Law of Moses - representing the perfectly righteous demands of God - Jesus obeyed in both the letter and the spirit. He is the only one who ever lived who did nothing wrong and everything right. But still, **the heavy stone of God's Law is what crushed and killed Jesus on the cross.** He died under the weight of God's justice not because of anything He had done to break that Law but because of everything you and I have done and have failed to do. The crushing weight of the Law that should fall on you and me instead already fell on Jesus - so we are totally free from fear that God's justice is waiting to crush us in the future. Those sins have already been paid for! The stone tablet of God's Law has been broken in half, like the Stone Table in Narnia.

The Lord will take me in. Do you know the blessed assurance of that truth? Do you know Jesus as the God who loves you perfectly, completely, infinitely? There is such freedom and joy and comfort in that knowledge! That God who saves is the God you can call on all day every day!

And He is the God who leads.

3. **Call** on the Lord - the One who **Leads**

“Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.” Psalm 27:11

Why do we pray? We pray for help, for power, for deliverance, for forgiveness - and we pray for GUIDANCE. This prayer shows that David did not presume on God's grace, he rested in God's grace. He did not take it for granted, he used the grace of God to motivate his life of holiness and his devotion to God's kingdom and will.

David knew, better than most, that just because you are right with God - accepted and loved forever - **does not mean that your enemies go away.** This petition is very clear - "Lead me on a level path BECAUSE OF MY ENEMIES." Our enemies would make us stumble. They would try to knock us down. So, we must ask God to guide our steps and to keep us from the things that might otherwise trip us up.

In verse 12 David talks about adversaries and false witnesses. **He knew his need for direction and power from the Lord.** Do we? Are we humble enough to really call on the Lord to guide our steps each day? Or if we're honest, are we pretty self-sufficient? Pretty self-reliant? Our prayer lives tell the story.

Here is how David concludes:

<p>"I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Psalm 27:13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The God who saves● The God who fills● The God who listens● The God who loves● The God who leads
---	---

David was confident in the God he knew. He was committed to trust in and obey the Lord. And he regularly called on the Lord. This is how to have a fearless faith. So David ends with a final exhortation.

<p>"Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord." Psalm 27:14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The God who saves● The God who fills● The God who listens● The God who loves● The God who leads
--	---

The more you know God the more you will be confident in Him and committed to Him - and the more you will be able to wait patiently, even in the midst of great struggle and fear.

One of the great heroes of prayer and of the church is Andrew Murray.

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/innertravelers/andrew-murray.html>

Murray was born in South Africa to Dutch Reformed missionaries who taught him about prayer and revival. He was trained in Scotland and greatly influenced by the revivals of the mid-1800s. Experiencing the love and grace of God and committing himself in service to the Lord, Murray said:

"May not a single moment of my life be spent outside the light, love, and joy of God's presence. And not a moment without the entire surrender of myself as a vessel for him to fill full of his Spirit and his love."

- Andrew Murray

He and his brother, John, returned to South Africa after their schooling and sought to bring revival to that relatively unreached area. By the grace of God, and not in the way he expected, revival did come. Murray knew the only hope for reaching people with the gospel and bringing lasting change would come through prayer - as he would later write in his classic, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*:

"God rules the world by the prayers of his saints, that prayer is the power by which Satan is conquered, that by prayer the church on earth has disposal of the powers of the heavenly world."

- Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*

For sixty years Murray served the Lord in South Africa, toward the end of that time he traveled and spoke to teach about prayer, holiness and revival. Probably one of the most prolific writers in Christian history, he produced over 240 books and tracts - many of which are still studied and appreciated today. He understood and applied the principles we see in Psalm 27 and wrote of being filled with the Spirit:

"I must be filled; it is absolutely necessary. I may be filled; God has made it blessedly possible. I would be filled; it is eminently desirable. I will be filled; it is so blessedly certain."

- Andrew Murray

This is the kind of confidence in the Lord we need, coupled with Murray's commitment to serve the Lord and call on His Name!

Let's pray now together.