

Chapter 27

27 The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?

The LORD *is* the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?

²When the wicked came against me
To eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes,
They stumbled and fell.

³Though an army may encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me,
In this I *will be* confident.

⁴One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.

⁵For in the time of trouble
He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.

⁶And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

⁷Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice!
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

⁸*When You said, "Seek My face,"*
My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."

⁹Do not hide Your face from me;
Do not turn Your servant away in anger;
You have been my help;
Do not leave me nor forsake me,
O God of my salvation.

¹⁰ When my father and my mother forsake me,
Then the LORD will take care of me.

¹¹ Teach me Your way, O LORD,
And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.

¹² Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries;
For false witnesses have risen against me,
And such as breathe out violence.

¹³ *I would have lost heart, unless I had believed*
That I would see the goodness of the LORD
In the land of the living.

¹⁴ Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!

Ever since the coronavirus came out, my mind keeps going back to Psalm 27. This is one of the greatest psalms in the Book of Psalms and it is one of the most powerful passages in the Bible. Since I was a young man and was first following Christ, time and again I've found the answer to my greatest questions in verses 13 and 14.

*¹³ I would have lost heart, unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of the LORD
In the land of the living.*

*¹⁴ Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!*

I think a paraphrase for what David is saying would be something like, "I would have just given up if there hadn't been times when I chose to believe that things would get better, and that I would somehow sometime once again see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. And the way I figured this out and the way I helped myself to find courage was to just wait on Him. When I waiting on Him and His sovereignty, He strengthened my heart. He renewed my heart. So, I'll tell the whole world, just to wait on the Lord."

This is a song of courageous trust. Scholars debate the psalm wondering if it is a lament or a song of trust. Some feel that it seems unnatural because of the song of trust in the first part followed by the lament. I don't find this to be a mystery at all. I find that I talk to myself like this a lot. You might have had a moment when you seemed overwhelmed by the trouble at hand, but then you have a spiritual light that turns on in your head. If we're honest sometimes

we start off with great biblical knowledge and in the heat of battle we just resort to the weapons of the flesh. This psalm tells us to put our hope in Him.

The psalmist, expressing great confidence in the LORD in spite of a host of enemies who threaten his life, prays for help and comfort in his time of need and rejoices in the hope of waiting on the LORD.

Let's now do a line by line and try to dig out some of the treasures that are found in this psalm.

Verses 1-3

The psalm begins declaring that the Lord is my “light” and my “salvation.” Fear lives in darkness. The unknown lives in darkness. David is saying that it is the Lord that sheds knowledge and understanding (let's say "the light") on the darkness that comes our way. Darkness represents evil, confusion, gloom and despair, and there's just a whole lot of that going on this last week. Secondly, the Lord is my salvation could be rephrased "the Lord is my deliverance". This entire past week I found myself looking at news stories about the plague that is on us, and then I've reminded myself that no news story, no facebook meme, no silver bullet is going to be given me to rid my mind of this worry. It is the LORD GOD and He alone that is my deliverance. Then David says, "When I look to the Lord to be my light in my darkness, and when I look to the Lord to be my salvation and deliverance from those things that would cause me to fear or hurt me, of whom should I be afraid? This is a rhetorical question. That means He's saying, "There's no way I'll have fear of anyone." The hebrew translated as "stronghold" (מְצוּדָה), which is a place of safety and protection. We can all identify with having a place of safety and protection. HE AND HE ALONE IS THAT PLACE OF SAFETY.

The psalmist then begins a sort of laundry list affirming, giving weight to past experiences when the Lord demonstrated his faithfulness.

²When the wicked came against me

To eat up my flesh,

My enemies and foes,

They stumbled and fell.

³Though an army may encamp against me,

My heart shall not fear;

Though war may rise against me,

In this I *will be* confident.

When "**muhrehim**" "when evil-doers advanced against me." Their purpose was "to devour" my flesh. Let me ask you exactly what a virus does? Did you know it cannot survive without a host to feast upon. It is a predator that wants to devour our flesh" and David is saying that these "evil-doers" (מְרַעֲיִים); s.v. Ps. 10:15) have one purpose: to cause pain and destruction. This was the

nature of David's "adversaries and enemies," but they stumbled and fell before him. Nothing can stand before God Almighty!

David then speaks to hypothetical events that haven't even happened in this war against his flesh. He says "Though an army come up against me, my heart will not fear. And even if war rise up against me, in THIS will I be confident.

Then he gives a lovely summation of how he goes about gaining his confidence and having it strengthened. It is strengthened by being in the Lord's sanctuary. We are now at a time when by governmental edict we cannot gather together in worship, but you can still go "up into the sanctuary" of the Lord. Notice that it is the ONE THING that David hones in on.

*⁴ One thing I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.*

*⁵ For in the time of trouble
He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.*

David is very clear that there is one thing he desires from the Lord, and that is to abide in the sanctuary and behold the glory of the Lord and to find security and celebration in just worshipping Him. Turn this recording off RIGHT NOW for a moment, and say, "Oh Lord, I want one thing of you right now, and that is just to know that I am in your presence. Lord help me to not just imagine, but to know that I stand before YOU and YOU see ever desire and worry of my heart."

Where you "dwell" is where you hang out. So where are you hanging out in these days of isolation and apartness? Are you dwelling in the sphere of worry and trepidation? You can do projects at home and sing praises while you do them. We are now finding a new normal so give praise to the Lord for giving you time off for this new normal. For many of us, it is a "normal" that we've needed for a long long time. This "normal" will only be temporary so use it for good things. Remember, Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus comes to give you life and give it to you more abundantly. Choose today to embrace this time. Celebrate it in the wonderful home He has provided for you.

To behold the "beauty of the Lord" is explained by the next two infinitive clauses. The first is "to see (gaze upon, from רָאָה) the delightfulness of the LORD. This idea can be contrasted with the pagan culture where people gazed on the beautiful statues of their gods. But in Israel, they did

not actually see God nor a statue of him. Rather, they would perceive his goodness. They would perceive His graciousness in all of His wonderful works that surrounded them.

The last infinitive “to seek” or “inquire” (וּלְבַקֵּר) is a reference to seeking the LORD’s will for guidance. That is what we need to be doing RIGHT NOW. I would challenge each of you listening to this podcast to spend as much time sitting still and inquiring of the Lord as you are with obsessing over where this virus came from and where it is going.

Our local, state, and federal government are doing a GREAT JOB instructing us on what to do to stay safe. Stop worrying about it and just do it. The reason I suspended "in building" services is because of suggestions by the governor of how to keep my congregation safe and healthy. I have told you all many many times that the building is not the church, but rather WE ARE THE CHURCH. Well, now we will find out if I was right, and we're going to find out who comes to be entertained and who comes to inquire of the Lord and to gaze upon His face.

In Verse 5 the psalmist offers an explanation for this desire to be in the LORD’s presence. It is God's presence that we find our place of refuge and security. It is in that "abiding" that we find our confidence and our protection. He is ready today to set you HIGH upon a rock. A rock does not move. A rock does not crumble. A rock does not falter. A rock does not fail. Go into His sanctuary and enter His courts with praise. In verse 6 He is declaring (some might say 'claiming') a positional truth. In trusting in the Lord his head is lifted above the enemies that surround him. He claims that truth by offering sacrifices of joy and singing praises to the Lord. Friends, that is what you can do RIGHT NOW. Realize that even with enemies all around you, you are set high upon a rock. I want you to sing today like you've never sung. Sing praises to your God because He is your rock and your deliverer.

The podcast that accompanies this written document fleshes out all of the verses that then follow, but I want to close this sermon where I started. Sometimes in life things get so dark and get so confused that we lose our sense of direction. We lose the plot. David ends by saying, during those dark depressing times he would have lost all hope if he just didn't believe that someday he would see things get better. In those times, your just need to trust and you need to wait. We are an impatient bunch. We want things to get "better" right now. But rejoice in the "right now". Know that you CAN and WILL see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

*¹⁴ Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!*

Let us pray.

