

Psalm 27: Whom Shall I Fear

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Psalm 27 (edited trans. by GS) 1 From David: The Covenant LORD is my light and my victory; Whom shall I fear? The Covenant LORD is the defensive Stronghold of my life; Whom shall I dread? 2 When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, My adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell. 3 Though a host encamp against me, My heart will not fear; Though war arise against me, In spite of this I shall be **confident**.

4 **One thing** I have asked from the Covenant LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Covenant LORD And to contemplate in His *temple*. 5 For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His *tabernacle*; In the secret place of His *tent* He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock. 6 Now I will triumph over my enemies who surround me, And I will offer in His *tent* sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Covenant LORD.

7 Hear, O Covenant LORD, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me. 8 When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O Covenant LORD, I shall seek." 9 Do not hide Your face from me, Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation! 10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the Covenant LORD will **comfort** me (take me up). 11 "Teach me how you want me to live; lead me along a level path because of those who wait to ambush me!" 12 Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence.

13 I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Covenant LORD In the land of the living. 14 Wait for the Covenant LORD; Be strong and let your heart take **courage**; Yes, wait for the Covenant LORD."

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Introduction

For several years a woman had been having trouble getting to sleep at night because she feared burglars. One night her husband heard a noise in the house, so he went downstairs to investigate. When he got there, he did find a burglar. "Good evening," said the man of the house. "I am pleased to see you. Come upstairs and meet my wife. She has been waiting 10 years to meet you." William Marshall, *Eternity Shut in a Span*.

Whom Shall I Fear? (Psalm 27)

A needed Spring Training (Lenten) is theme is overcoming anxiety. Casting anxiety on the Lord is an active spiritual discipline. Psalm 27's theme is confidence in the presence of God which removes fear. The Psalm is in two sections (1-6, 7-14). The outline broadly forms a parallel (*chiasm*) which we will expand into main points.

- A) Confidence in God's Presence (vv1-3)
- B) Praise for God's Presence (vv4-6)
- B') Prayer for God's Presence (vv7-12)
- A') Confidence in God's Presence (vv13-14)

The Main Themes

- 1) Confidence in God's Light (vv1-3)
- 2) Contentment in God's Presence (vv4-6)
- 3) Comfort in Troubles (vv 7-12)
- 4) Courage instead of Despair (vv13-14)

1) Confidence in God's Light (vv1-3) -

From David: The Covenant LORD is my light and my victory; Whom shall I fear? The Covenant LORD is the defensive Stronghold of my life; Whom shall I dread? 2 When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, My adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell. 3 Though a host encamp against me, My heart will not fear; Though war arise against me, In spite of this I shall be **confident**.

We should have confidence in God because He is our light, our deliverance, and our defense (v1). The result of this is faith not fear and worship not worry. Fear comes when that which we trust fails. Anxiety is produced when our "light" is not the Word but false ideas. *Do you trust your resources (money), your natural abilities, or other people (spouse, family, friends, leaders, government, etc.)?*

An average person's anxiety is focused on :

- 40% -- things that will never happen*
- 30% -- things about the past that can't be changed*
- 12% -- things about criticism by others, mostly untrue*
- 10% -- about health, which gets worse with stress*
- 8% -- about real problems that will be faced*

2) Contentment in God's Presence (vv4-6) -

4 One thing I have asked from the Covenant LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Covenant LORD And to contemplate in His *temple*. 5 For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His *tabernacle*; In the secret place of His *tent* He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock. 6 Now I will triumph over my enemies who around me, And I will offer in His *tent* sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Covenant LORD.

David established this house of worship in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, even while the Tabernacle of Moses was in Gibeon. Mosaic sacrifices continued to be offered in Gibeon (2Chr. 1:3).

So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. . . And he appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to

commemorate, to thank, and to praise the LORD God of Israel: Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-edom: Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly blew the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God. (1 Chr 16:1–6 NKJV)

A striking truth for those who love the Psalms is that David's place of worship was this place, not the later temple built by Solomon and not the Mosaic Tabernacle located in Gibeon. So in the Psalms when we read that David longed to be at the House of the Lord or meditated on the beauty of God in His temple, he was referring to this Tabernacle (of David) (Ps. 5:7, 11:4, 18:6, etc).

Psalm 27 says "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" (Psalm 27:4). When David was beholding the beauty of the Lord, he was doing so in praise, seeing the Ark at the place known to us as the Tabernacle of David.

The biblical theology of the concept of Zion is a golden stair-case winding to heaven. While this Tabernacle is the place of the first and only worship on this mount, Zion truly becomes an icon of heaven's worship. The Tabernacle of David is the origin.

Throughout the Old Testament Zion becomes the location of God's special presence with is people: "God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved" (Psalm 46:5). "His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion" (Psalm 76:2). "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth" (Psalm 50:2).

"Safety consists not in the absence of danger but in the presence of God."

We should seek God's presence because only in *seeing Him as He is will we worship Him as we ought*. True worship involves meditation, seeing the beauty of the Lord, and the sacrifice of praise (4 & 6). This kind of worship lifts us above our enemies (5-6). This place of worship was the unique Tabernacle of David (1Chr. 16). *Have you every truly worshiped?*

Commentator (WBC) Cragie said : "God's beauty and glory as symbolized in the temple, specifically in the Ark."

True biblical worship so satisfies our total personality that we don't have to shop around for man-made substitutes.

We must worship God for who He is.

Sacrifices of Praise (cf Hebrews) v6 Now I will triumph over my enemies who around me, And I will offer in His *tent* sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Worry and prayer are similar mental activities. Worry uses the same faculties that prayer uses. In both our thoughts and words are present, as well our emotions and imaginations. Worry is imagination used in futility. Effective prayer reverses this and asks God for vivid, specific and tangible requests with gratitude. The process of exchanging futile anxieties for fruitful prayer entails several steps. (see G Strawbridge on Philippians 4 Sermons www.allsaints-church.com)

3) **Comfort in Troubles (vv 7-12) -**

7 Hear, O Covenant LORD, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me. 8 When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O Covenant LORD, I shall seek." 9 Do not hide Your face from me, Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation! 10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the Covenant LORD will take me up. Psa 27:11 NET - "Teach me how you want me to live; lead me along a level path because of those who wait to ambush me!" 12 Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence.

We should cry out for God's presence in the times when we feel abandoned, knowing that He will not forsake us (vv9-10). This surprising turn in the mood (v7) represents the ordinary experience of believers. We prepare in worship and then we face life challenges. We must remember He will "take me up" (v11). *Despite your confessed faith, do you still fear that God may abandon you to trouble and trials?*

William Ward said: "Discouragement is dissatisfaction with the past, distaste for the present, and distrust of the future. It is ingratitude for the blessings of yesterday, indifference to the opportunities of today, and insecurity regarding strength for tomorrow. It is unawareness of the presence of beauty, unconcern for the needs of our fellowman, and unbelief in the promises of old. It is impatience with time, immaturity of thought, and impoliteness to God."

"Peace that Jesus gives is not the absence of trouble, but is rather the confidence that He is there with you always."

4) **Courage instead of Despair (vv13-14) -**

13 I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Covenant LORD In the land of the living. 14 Wait for the Covenant LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Covenant LORD."

If we have confidence in God because He is our light, deliverance, and defense; and if we have prepared by worship (meditation, God's beauty, and praise), then despite our "day of trouble" we will return to confidence in God's presence. Despair will come "unless we believe" we will "see the goodness of the LORD" (v13). The spiritual discipline to practice is patience instead of anxiety. *Will you "wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage" (v14)?*

13 I would have **despaired unless I had believed** that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. 14 Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.”

Can we believe that God will “make good” on all that has happened?

The darkest, blackest and most evil thing that ever happened was the crucifixion of Jesus, a truly righteous and completely innocent man. Yet, we are certain that that most evil event has turned out for salvation to the world, “that the world might be saved!” (John 3:17).

If God can make this good, then He can surely make every other trial, pain, all suffering and hard things good too.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel ---- and it’s not a freight train.

Tertullian said: Hope is patience with the lamp lit.