

Psalm 27

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 evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear, though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek; 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 seek Him in His temple.

For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at His tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hear my voice when I call O Lord; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of You, “Seek His face!” Your face, Lord, will I 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, O 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, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.

I am still confident of this: I will seek the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

This psalm written by David, some say before He was anointed King, others in his old age, it doesn't really matter when, is a declaration by David of how God has sustained Him through times of adversity and how David has a certain hope that God will sustain him in all circumstances of his life. It is an exhortation that God is his sustainer, his Saviour and his deliverer and that God will never leave him.

As with many of his psalms David starts by recognising who God is and his dependency on him. David was described as the “light of Israel” but here he acknowledges that that light does not come from himself but is a reflection of the light of God who sustains him, much as the moon reflects the light of the sun without which it would be a dull, dark, boring planet. With the sun's light on it, it becomes something that men have strived to reach, poets have written poetry about and several books have been based upon.

Similarly as David and we reflect the light of God to those around us then, hopefully, they see something in us that is exciting and vibrant and alive, something which will arouse their interest and drive them to want to find out more and thus God's kingdom grows.

David also recognises that God is his salvation. It is only through faith in a true and living God that he knows the surety of a lifetime relationship, not only in this world but also the next with a God who loves, sustains and protects him in all circumstances. As we know God as our Saviour through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ then we too can have that sure and certain hope of a life

upheld and guided and directed by Him, not only in our life on earth but also in the life to come as we have the promise of eternal life through Jesus and our faith in Him.

David goes on to emphasize this in his next statement “The Lord is the stronghold of my life” As David, and we, put all of our trust and our hopes into God’s hands He has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us, or burden us with anything more than we can manage and that He will be with us every step of the way once we accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. As that wonderful piece of literature “Footprints in the sand” reminds us even in our darkest moments He will not forsake us, indeed in our darkest, darkest moments not only will He walk with us but will pick us up and carry us when our own strength fails until we are ready to resume the walk ourselves.

It is no wonder then that David is able to say next, “of whom shall I be afraid??” Even in the worst of times, and David describes some in verses 2-3 he knows that God is with him and will look after him, in God’s own way I might add, which may not be the way we would expect, but will be the best way because it’s God’s way and His ways are always best.

David now shows his heart’s desire, his inmost petition of God, “One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek:”

Is it riches and wealth, success in man’s eyes, a brand new Mercedes, or what ever the equivalent was in those days, an Arabian thoroughbred horse perhaps?, more and more land, sheep, goats, power? No it was none of these. David knew the most important thing in his life was what he asked for now; “that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life” why? “to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.”

God gives us glimpses of His beauty from time to time. The most obvious example is in the beauty of His creation. Lynne and I were in Wales last week and saw the beauty of God’s creation in two very contrasting ways. At night there were 70 mph winds which threatened to blow down trees and made our caravan rock a little too much on occasion and whipped the waves on the sea over the rocks and shoreline such was the force of God’s creation. During the day the winds stilled and the sun shone and on a couple of occasions we drove out into the countryside of North Wales and saw the amazing variety of greens and different varieties of trees and shrubs and flowers and animals and wondered how anyone could think that this beauty all appeared randomly by chance.

We also witnessed two amazing sunsets with all the variety of reds and pinks and violets and purples and as it tells us in Genesis 1:13, “And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. On the fourth day of course He made the stars and we saw some amazing night skies!

As if that wasn’t enough we also went to “Blue Planet” which we were told houses the largest walk through water tunnel in Europe, possibly the world, where you can look up and see an amazing array of what God created to be under the sea as well from sharks to rays from the smallest sea anemones to the largest fish weighing well over 60-70 lbs all swimming over and around you. We even missed some of our time in Cheshire Oaks shopping mall to stay and wonder at it a little longer.

David then acknowledges his dependency on God for his safe keeping:

“For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.”

When we are in a close intimate relationship with God we can draw comfort from his presence whatever our circumstances and David acknowledges, as should we, that there will be days of trouble, and those of you that know David’s story and I’m sure that’s most of you, will know that he had more than his fair share, many of them of his own making, and had seen God’s grace and mercy on each occasion. I’m sure if I asked for testimony of God’s grace in your lives at times of trouble, every one of you would be able to bring several to mind.

David in verses 7-10 acknowledges the dependability of God if we seek His face. He states that his father or mother may forsake him, which may sound a little harsh but may mean that they grow old and die, or are in a different place to him when he needs them, but also sadly in some cases that they turn their backs on him for whatever reason; I have to say that my relationship with my father was not the best although we were reconciled before he died: but God will always be there for him.

David then asks God to: “Teach me Your way, O Lord: lead me in a straight path.”. David here is saying God I need You to lead , teach, rebuke and direct my path because I can’t do it on my own, I need Your help please; much as Paul acknowledges his personal weaknesses in Romans 7: 15-25, that tongue twister when you are trying to read it aloud, where Paul acknowledges that whilst he knows it is wrong sin wins out sometimes, but as David here recognises God’s power to save and direct through Jesus Christ as he proclaims: “ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!” and in 8 :1-3; “ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of Life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”

In a similar way David ends his psalm by acknowledging that although he is going to and has seen many troubles in his life ; **“I AM STILL *CONFIDENT* OF THIS: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.**

God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and no matter what life throws at us He will be there with us, carrying us if necessary, and we can rely on Him to be our helper and our friend and to deliver us safely onto the other shore and strengthen us through our experiences of life.

Are you able to say with Paul “Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord”

Or with David:

“ I am still confident of this, I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living”

Whatever circumstance you may be in at the present time. I hope you are but if you are not you just need to turn to the Lord and ask for His help and guidance and He will welcome you with open arms and love and comfort you unconditionally.