

The LORD, My Only Confidence

Psalm 27

Proposition- Because the LORD is our light, salvation, and stronghold, right worship is confident and undivided.

1. Lay a foundation of truth. (v. 1-3)

Here David sets up the over-arching truth that is going to govern all of Psalm 27. This is the cornerstone of our foundation of truth in that all of the other truth set forth will build off this one. Verse 1, The LORD is my light and my salvation, The LORD is the stronghold (or refuge) of my life. So the LORD is David's light, the one that allows him to see clearly and understand what is going on around him. The Lord is his salvation, the one that rescues him when he is in a dire situation with no other hope. And the LORD is his stronghold, his place of refuge and shelter when he is under attack. This is incredibly significant; it changes everything. The reason it changes everything is not that David has a light, salvation, and stronghold. Everyone has those in some form or another. The significant thing is *who* those things are. The LORD.

Now I want us to notice the title David uses for God throughout this Psalm. He directly addressed God 14 times in Psalm 27, and 13 of those times he calls him LORD written in all caps in our English Bibles. This is the notation used for the personal name of the God of Israel, Yahweh. It's like calling me Ben rather than the pastoral intern or that young guy who

preaches sometimes. It is the name that God revealed to Moses at the burning bush just before the Exodus from Egypt which culminated in the parting of the Red Sea, and it means I AM. The name Yahweh by definition claims absolute eternity and steadfastness. Yahweh has always been, has never struggled, and has never been in need. Yahweh is the one who did the unthinkable by entering into a covenant with Abraham, a mere man, and the one who did even the impossible by delivering his people from an unbreakable bondage. This is the God of David and this is our God as well. We do not simply have a light, salvation, and stronghold, we have the one who is truly limitless and has proven in Jesus Christ that he will go to the farthest end to be our guiding light, delivering savior, and safe stronghold for the sake of his own name, Yahweh.

When we grasp this, everything changes, and the answer to the question of Verse 1 is painfully obvious. Whom shall we fear? Of whom shall we be afraid? Ask yourself. Nobody! In fact, write "ask yourself" in the margins of your Bible. Never ever read this again without believing this truth in your heart, asking your heart this question, and responding with a resounding "I will fear NOBODY because the I AM is my light, the I AM is my salvation, and the I AM is my stronghold." Friends, because of who the LORD is toward us in Christ, fear is a grand hoax.

Next in Verses 2-3 David immediately applies this paradigm forming truth to his real life. Verse 2- When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes. I would guess that none of our adversaries and foes are trying to eat up our flesh, but the idea here is of total destruction and complete humiliation. To assail is to attack, berate, abuse, lambaste, or assault, and I think we can all relate to this. In our culture it is downright offensive to believe in a God or an objective moral standard, let alone the God or moral standard

of the Bible. Christianity is often assailed. And the faithful followers of the LORD are certainly assailed by Satan and their own evil desires. But, what will happen to the true enemy of God's true people? Verse 2- In trying to attack, they will fall. And isn't this what happened once for all on the cross? The Enemy launched an all-out assault on Christ and dealt what he thought to be the final crushing blow, but this blow was actually the ultimate victory of the LORD on behalf of his people. Even when it looked as though Christ had suffered the greatest defeat imaginable, the LORD was working the greatest victory attainable. He was exalting Jesus above all things and solving the problem of sin and death once and for all and he did so using the ignorance and ugliness of men and the brutality of a cross.

Believer, if God can and will do this, what is it in our lives that we fear he will fail to do? He has proven and continues to prove his ability to do all things in upholding all of creation, and he has proven his covenant commitment to his people on the cross, so, Verse 3, when an army encamps me, my heart shall not fear, though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. When you are following the LORD and an unstoppable force or an unendurable circumstance or an unsolvable problem arises against you, be confident and do not fear. Banish fear from your heart and bolster your confidence. Why? Because the LORD is your light and salvation and the stronghold of your life and when evildoers assail you, it is they who stumble and fall. This is no promise for earthly success or prosperity or comfort, but for heavenly defense and salvation. And if the LORD is your light, you will see that there is a much greater work happening in your life than prosperity in this life, for he will show you in increasing clarity the glorious heavenly graces that he is enacting toward you. He is giving you his best, not the phony blessings of the world.

So, once we have laid this foundation of truth, how do we respond?

2. Seek God with an undivided heart. (v. 4-12)

In verse 4 David states how he will respond, in verses 5-6 he gives a reason for that response, and in 7-12 he actually responds.

Verse 4- One thing I have asked of the Lord, that will I seek after. Stop right there. David's heart here is undivided. Only one thing is the object of his prayers and that same thing is the object of his action. Allow me to pause here and address a small but significant pet-peeve of mine. There is not a conflict or a tension between praying and doing, as if being completely devoted to praying for God's work to be done prevents or inhibits someone from a complete devotion to doing God's work. They are perfectly connected and work together with no interference. If you find yourself unable to do because of your praying or unable to pray because of your doing, either your praying or your doing is incorrect. Proper prayer produces proper action, and kingdom work is done with a prayerfully dependent heart, which is why David asks the Lord for and seeks after this one thing.

So what is the one thing? Verse 4- That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. The one thing is the presence of God. David's prayers are undivided and his action is undivided in seeking the face of God. That's not to say that he doesn't pray for or do anything else, but everything flows out of this desire and everything moves toward this end: to sit before the face of God. And why, David? what are you going to do in the presence of God? Verse 4- Gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and inquire (or meditate) in his temple. To David, nothing is more captivating than the beauty of the one

who his only light, salvation, and stronghold, and the wisdom of the world is a watered down, foolish waste of time compared to learning at the feet of the I AM. God, give us hearts like this.

And why does David respond in this way? Why is the presence of God his one thing? Verse 5 starts with the word “for,” which is a less strong way of saying because. So why is the presence of the LORD David’s one thing? David says, “Because 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. Verse 6- And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies around me and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.” In short, because of verse 1, because the LORD is my light and salvation and stronghold. And look at the end of Verse 6- I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD. David knows that his desire for and seeking of the LORD will not be in vain. He will surely come before the face of God. He will not be disappointed.

I think what we see here is that these two sections, 1-3 and 4-6, force us to ask two questions of ourselves. First, who or what is my light, salvation, and stronghold? Second, who or what is my one thing? Here’s one of the most important things I think this passage forces us to recognize: at any given moment, our true answer to the first question will be our true answer to the second. Whatever your heart is truly seeking, that will be the light that guides you, the thing you rely on to save you, and the stronghold that you run to.

Therefore, we must ask ourselves each morning, “What will my one thing be today?” And we must fight the urge to answer in our hearts Money, My own reputation, Worldly success, My children, My spouse, Entertainment, Approval, or any other thing this world offers. And we must choose the one

who, though lacking nothing, has entered into a covenanted relationship with us in his own blood and promised us an eternity’s worth of the greatest possible thing: his beautiful, transforming presence. Worldly pleasures are a dim, flickering light that will soon vanish; other people are a weak, crumbling, unreliable stronghold; and any savior you find in this world is false and temporary. So, today, seek the LORD who is a perfect light, salvation, and stronghold with an undivided heart.

But how do we do that? What does that look like? Thankfully, in 7-12, David shows us. Remember in 1-3 he laid a foundation of truth, then in 4-6 he stated how he would respond, now in 7-12, he actually responds by seeking the presence of God as his one thing. So let’s walk through these verses and see what we can learn about seeking the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud;

Seeking the LORD is not a passive or boring endeavor, it is desperate and passionate.

be gracious to me and answer me!

And yet, seeking the LORD must be done in humility, recognizing that God does not owe us a response, but has promised to graciously give us what we are not entitled to.

8 You have said, “Seek my face.”

My heart says to you,

“Your face, LORD, do I seek.”

Seeking the LORD is an act of obedience and should be done at a heart level in response to the Word of God. The LORD says, so our hearts answer.

9 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!

Even in making bold requests, we must recognize that the LORD is not found, but revealed. When we get a taste of the presence of God, it not because we grabbed it, but because he gave it to us.

¹⁰ For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
but the LORD will take me in.

Even when seeking the LORD is a struggle, we shouldn't lose the confidence that we had in verses 1-6. Even when the unimaginable happens, when those we count on most fail, the LORD certainly will not.

¹¹ Teach me your way, O LORD,
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.

Remember from verse 4 that we don't just seek the LORD to gaze on his beauty, but also to inquire, to ask and learn. Seeking the LORD includes seeking his ways, which we know are the best.

¹² Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they breathe out violence.

Seeking the LORD can and should be done by going to him with our needs and asking him to deliver us from the things that are blocking the path to his presence.

I know I went through these things briefly, but their real value is in practice rather than in theory. These verses are powerful, God-breathed prayers for the people who have

chosen to pursue the LORD. It is valuable for us to study them, but only in so far as that study allows us to chase after God's presence in pouring our hearts out through them. Let these verses give language to your seeking this week. Pray them over and over and over until your heart can cry them out passionately and effortlessly. These verses will not fail you.

In the last small section of this Psalm, David transitions out of addressing God and back into addressing himself. In these two verses, he gives us guidance concerning how we should then live as people who are committed to seeking the LORD as our one thing, and it can be summed up like this.

3. Live in bold submission. (v. 13-14)

Verse 13- I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. David leaves his time of focused, prayerful pursuit of God totally assured that it was not in vain. His heart is convinced that, even in the midst of a stressful or intimidating season, whether he felt like he experienced God or not, he would look upon the goodness of the LORD. David thought of this in a temporary immediate sense, but we know that this reality has an eternal dimension too. Not only will God surely draw us into glimpse of his presence in this age, he will certainly bring us into his presence in the fullest sense for all of eternity. This is certain and it is infinitely worthy of our whole-hearted belief.

Friends, this reality is so freeing and produces such boldness. This kind of biblical thinking frees us up to take every radical, difficult, seemingly illogical risk that God calls us to in our pursuit of Him. When we think like this, when we believe that no matter how confusing or impossible the next step seems God will bring us to himself, life becomes a grand, exciting, fear and worry free adventure. 2 Corinthians 4:17-

For this light and momentary affliction is preparing for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. Yes! Bring on the difficulty, bring on the trial, bring on the opposition and the confusion. God I don't care where and I don't care why, send me! I will pursue you anytime and anywhere. Why? Because I believe that I will look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living forever and in that moment I will be perfectly glad that you were my one thing in this life.

So, with that rock-solid belief at the front of my heart and mind, what do I do right now? Verse 14- Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD. I played football in high school, and I played on the offensive line. My job, along with the other lineman, was to push the people on defense out of the way so that the running back with the ball had a gap to run through. This gap is called a hole. My favorite running back that I ever blocked for, his name was Michael, was a great running back because he was patient. Even though he was really strong and really fast, he was patient. That means that when he got the ball, instead of running wild, he would wait. He would wait for me and the other lineman to push the defense out of the way and make the hole. And when the hole opened up, he would explode through it and move the ball forward for our team. Now, if Michael never waited, he would have slammed into my back and the play wouldn't work. On the other hand, if he had been lazy and unprepared when the hole opened up, it would have closed and the play wouldn't have worked.

Friends, I think this is what Psalm 27 is talking about when it instructs us to wait for the LORD. We need to be in the Word all the time, in prayer constantly, surrounded by people who are doing the same, ready to explode through the hole, but waiting. We need to have our eyes wide open for what the LORD is doing around us and for us, perfectly prepared to take

the next step of faith that he calls us to, but not doing things in our own timing. We need perfect patience along with perfect preparedness. This is what I call bold submission. It's the confidence and freedom that believing in the faithfulness of God to bring us to himself produces combined with the total commitment to never doing what the LORD has not called us to do.

God delights in using this kind of person. This kind of person takes no credit for themselves. They do not expect any glory, because the LORD is their one thing, not recognition. This kind of person takes great joy in being used by God, even if it is for something that looks ugly or undesirable from the outside. This kind of person is always satisfied, because the LORD never ever fails to draw them to himself and they are continually more convinced that he will do this for eternity. Believers, let's be this kind of person. Trinity, let's be this kind of church. Let's be so committed to seeking the LORD that we never miss what he is doing amongst us and through us. May our worship, personally and collectively, be built on the rock-solid foundation which is that the LORD, the I AM is our light and salvation and stronghold. May we have undivided hearts in our seeking after the presence of the LORD for eternity. And may we live perfectly emboldened by the faithfulness of the LORD and perfectly submitted to his kingly leadership.