

PSALM 27 – THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Cecil Clements

Date: 13 March 2022

Scripture: Psalm 27

Psalm 27

¹The LORD is my light and my salvation—
so why should I be afraid?
The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger,
so why should I tremble?

²When evil people come to devour me,
when my enemies and foes attack me,
they will stumble and fall.

³Though a mighty army surrounds me,
my heart will not be afraid.
Even if I am attacked,
I will remain confident.

⁴The one thing I ask of the LORD—
the thing I seek most—
is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
delighting in the LORD's perfections
and meditating in his Temple.

⁵For he will conceal me there when troubles come;
he will hide me in his sanctuary.
He will place me out of reach on a high rock.

⁶Then I will hold my head high
above my enemies who surround me.
At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy,
singing and praising the LORD with music.

⁷Hear me as I pray, O LORD.
Be merciful and answer me!

⁸My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me."
And my heart responds, "LORD, I am coming."

⁹Do not turn your back on me.
Do not reject your servant in anger.
You have always been my helper.
Don't leave me now; don't abandon me,
O God of my salvation!

¹⁰Even if my father and mother abandon me,
the LORD will hold me close.

¹¹Teach me how to live, O LORD.
Lead me along the right path,
for my enemies are waiting for me.

¹²Do not let me fall into their hands.
For they accuse me of things I've never done;
with every breath they threaten me with violence.

¹³Yet I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness
while I am here in the land of the living.

¹⁴Wait patiently for the LORD.

Be brave and courageous.
Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.

Those last words almost seem to be an invitation for us to just wait patiently for Him. We are just going through this Psalm verse by verse, and then mine it for what we can at this moment in time and see how that applies to our situations.

The Lord is my Light and my Salvation – so why should I be afraid?

David is saying this amid all kinds of difficulties. He is on the run. He's been promised he's the kingdom, and yet he's running for his life; he's been avoiding the spears of Saul and all kinds of troubles are around him. And in the midst of this he says, "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation." In other words, the Lord is my Light. In the darkness that seems to envelope me through my situations, He is the One who sheds light. He is the One who can dispel that darkness and be my Savior, bringing salvation out of this situation.

We need to pause right there and ask ourselves – what situation faces us? What kind of situation are we in that we need His Light, His glorious Light to come and dispel the darkness or the gloom that may be upon us or surrounding us. Look at what is in front of David as he speaks. He says, "***The Lord is my fortress protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?***"

When people come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident.

People come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, although a mighty army surrounds me, he says, even if I am attacked. These are the things, his descriptives as he talks about his situation. And I want to ask you today – maybe we don't have armies surrounding us physically. Maybe we are not at war as some nations are. Maybe there isn't the kind of trouble like what he is talking about. But maybe we have our own battles. Maybe there is darkness that surrounds you. Maybe there are people out to get you. Maybe the enemies are in your mind trying to bring you down and debilitate you. Maybe you've got an office situation where colleagues are talking behind your back trying to trip you up. Or even in college or school, you're trying to do what is right and other kids want to bring you down and not let you do what's right.

Maybe those are your situations today – at home or among relationships; there is great turmoil and you can understand what it means to feel that everything is arranged against you, and you are fighting in a war, your war. Nothing physical maybe, and yet you can fully understand, as David talks about being enveloped and surrounded. You can relate to it and feel you know exactly what he's talking about.

But in the midst of all this, he says, "Why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?" He bases the fact that he is confident and he can be fearless in the situation on the fact that he can go to God and that God will protect him, that God is like a fortress. This is war imagery.

And yet, for us too as we look at it, what would be a fortress for us to go to? How can we sense God's presence in ways that will help us to know that He is enveloping us, that He is taking care of us, that we too can say, "I will not fear, I will not tremble, I will be confident, I will remain confident."

Then he says, and we get an inkling into the reasons for his confidence.

The one thing I ask of the Lord, (in the NASB or the Greek, it is in the past tense) this is what I had asked of Him, the thing that I seek the most is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in His temple.

Seek to live, to meditate. These are the things that become his one thing – to live in that kind of proximity with God. Out of that proximity comes his fearlessness as he looks at the situation, and his confidence. To seek God, to meditate upon Him, to delight in everything about Him. In other words, to spend time in His presence. It's not that David had a place that he could go. He may have longed to sit in the temple and meditate and forget about the war, forget about everything else and just listen to God. He loved God so much.

It doesn't mean that you and I come church and just stay here. What it means is that we come into His presence in such a way that every moment of every day we are in that space where God is. As we wake up, we recognize that God watched over us through the night. As we get ready, we thank God for all that He has given us. We pray and ask Him to lead us through the day. Each day, each hour we experience His faithfulness. We lean upon His understanding. The space that we live in is one that God is in. that's what David is saying: That's the place that I want to be at every moment of every hour – in His presence. I don't move from that because in His presence is where I get this confidence to face any obstacle. Because then, I am His and He will take care of me.

That's the challenge, beloved, for you and me today even as we face the various struggles that we have in our lives. Are we in that space where God is? Or is God somewhere where we meet Him for five minutes every morning and evening, and then go about our day without Him. We come back and just connect with Him for a bit.

But David says, "No! The one thing that I want, one thing that I asked of God is that I will stay in His presence every moment, every second of every day. Then I can say with confidence 'The Lord will be my fortress.' I am not worried about any of the things that surround me because God has got my back." It's not that we don't go through difficult times. We will! Look at David – he was running for his life, but God took care of him. God fed him and even gave him water in times that he needed it. He had people around him who cared for him. God looked after His chosen one. He says, "One thing I asked of the Lord that I may seek Him and stay in His presence. I won't fear and I will be confident because He is my fortress. The others will stumble and fall."

For He will conceal me there when troubles come. he will hide me in His sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock.

Think of this imagery that he is giving us. We are down here and messing up with all the situations that are around us. Then God comes and lifts us up and places us on a high rock. Then we look at our situations from that place; from that height we look down at those situations and circumstances and realize that they cannot harm us. He says, "This is what happens. He will conceal me there when troubles come."

***Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me.
At His sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the Lord with music.***

Notice that the enemies are still there, but he is now above them. And the secret of that exalted position is this one thing I have desired of the Lord. Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At His sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the Lord with music. At this place, as I stand on the rock above my enemies, I will not look down at them

and mock them. No! I will turn my gaze up to the heavens and I will worship You. I will sing praises to Your name.

As I was reading this, I was challenged to ask myself: How much time do I spend in worship? And I want to challenge you as well. do we worship Him? If we get 5 or 10 minutes, so we spend time just singing to Him? Maybe you don't feel like singing, but that's why scripture says you can make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Even that is acceptable. Let God know that in this place that He has exalted you, that you will look up to Him and worship Him.

When I look at this Psalm, I see almost two distinct divisions: verses 1-6 and then verses 7-14. The difference is head and heart, almost. In 1-6, there's this confidence, this bravado. It's all very analytical, very logical. And then in verses 7-14, it's emotional. It's like he gives into some of his emotions as he thinks about his situation.

Hear me as I pray, O Lord. Be merciful and answer me.

In this position that he is, he's saying: Lord, listen to my prayer.

My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with Me."

And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming."

God is saying, "Come and talk with Me," and his responds and says, "Lord, I'm coming."

What kind of conversations do you and I have with God? What's your conversation like with Him?? Do you ask God about His day? Do you ask Him about what He was thinking when He spoke the world into existence? How did He manage to color the flowers so beautifully? What made Him think about lightning and thunder during a thunderstorm? Do you ask Him about things or is it just Lord, please help me. I'm in a fix and I need your help. What conversations do we have with Him? Do we tell Him what's going on in our day, how we felt?

And that's what David is saying, "My heart heard the Lord calling and saying, 'Come and talk to Me.'" And he says, "I came." That's why the Psalms are almost so guttural, because they are open. They speak of what's going on. But look at the way we sometimes pray. We are so sophisticated in our prayers. And yet, there's something so visceral about the psalms, that you can go to God just as you are, the way you are feeling and talk to Him.

Maybe that invitation is for some of us here today, that God is saying, "Come and talk with Me. Tell Me what's going on in your life. tell Me the things that you enjoy in this world, the things that you look forward to when this world comes to an end." Talk to Him, tell Him what's going on, what you think, what you expect, what your hopes and aspirations are. Have a conversation with God.

I talk to Jesus every day
And He's interested in every word I say.
No secretary ever tells me He's been called away
I talk to Jesus every day.

Those are the lyrics to that beautiful song.

Do not turn Your back on me. Do not reject Your servant in anger. You have always been my helper.

Don't leave me now; don't abandon me, O God of my salvation!

There's a sense of reality that begins to creep in now when he realizes who he is, that there are sins that he has committed. So he is honest before God and says, "Don't turn Your back on me. Don't reject me in anger. You have always been my helper; don't abandon me now. You are the God who saves me. You are the God of my salvation.

Then these beautiful words:

Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.

Beloved, that's a reality today, that there are many who feel abandoned by parents, by friends, by loved ones, by family – abandoned and alone. They think they are alone. and yet, the Bible says that even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close. Beloved, the Lord will hold you close.

I don't know whether this passage relates to you today, but I know that every one of us knows somebody who can relate to these words. That's the world we live in. we read in Isaiah, "Though it is difficult for a mother to forget her nursing child; and even if she does, I will not forget you," says the Lord God Almighty. I will hold you close even though you think that nobody loves you, nobody cares for you, that you're abandoned. Beloved, God says "I will hold you close."

Teach me how to live, O Lord

Teach me how to live in this place that we are in now, where there is just this honesty between us. We're having conversations together Lord, show me how to live.

Lead me along the right path for my enemies are waiting for me.

Do not let me fall into their hands for they accuse me of things I've never done.

With every breath they threaten me with violence.

And we know this well. we face this all the time. there's slander from different sources, people who say things that you did that you never did. And he says, "Help me how to navigate this system that I am in. how do I go through these? How do I face these enemies who are out to get me with lies? Show me Lord!

Yet I am confident that I will see the Lord's goodness while I'm here in the land of the living.

What is David saying? He is saying that the goodness of the Lord is not a pie in the sky, by-and-by theory – that someday I'll experience God's goodness. No! he's saying: The goodness of the Lord – I will experience in the here and now. In my lifetime I will experience the goodness of God. Beloved, that is true for you and me too. God is not saying to any of you that if you want to know how good I am, wait till you get to heaven. No! He's saying right now, while you are alive. You can know the goodness of God right now while you are living, every day you can know His goodness.

Think for a moment of the many times that you have sensed and known God's goodness in your life. when He has healed you, when He has brought you through a difficult situation, when He has allowed you to stand tall, when he has defended you when you were trying to have integrity about a situation, when He has been your shield, protected you, gave you wisdom. The goodness of the Lord is evident every day in our lives.

And that's what David is saying: I will see the goodness of God in the day of the living. While I am alive, I will see it. I don't know about you, but that encourages me so much even though I've seen the goodness of God in so many beautiful ways in the past, and I know that you all would subscribe to that. Yet, I want to see the goodness of God again today, and again tomorrow, and again the day

after. And not just once in a day but every moment of every day. I want to see the goodness of God. Lord, we too want that. And we know the place where we find it. It's in the 'one thing' place. The one thing I have asked Him – to stay in His presence. In His presence we will continue to see the goodness of God.

So beloved, wherever you are in your situations, whatever enemy is confronting you, whatever demon is trying to strangle you or scare you, whatever situation or circumstance seems to overwhelm you, the words of the Psalm for us is:

Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous.

Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.

Don't jump in and try to do things in your own strength. Trust Him. Give God the space to act and you will see the goodness of God many times over in this life that you and I are living. For I know that He has been faithful. And we will continue to see His goodness. Amen.

Let us pray together!

Heavenly Father, we just thank You for Your presence here with us. Thank You for Your Word. Thank You Lord that You continue to show us Your goodness in such beautiful refreshing, encouraging, invigorating ways. Lord, as the songwriter says, "All my life You have been faithful, and we will sing of the goodness of God." Lord, all our lives You have been faithful. Continue Lord, to show us Your goodness as we continue to press in into place where You are - in us, around us, all about us Lord, in that Holy space where You are. We love You, and we pray this prayer in Your beautiful name Lord Jesus. Amen.