

LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF FAITH

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Scripture: Psalm 27

Psalm 27 is a familiar psalm, but I think there's a lot that we can glean from it. We're going to look at the first six verses.

Psalm 27:1-6

*"27 The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the defense 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 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 Lord
And to meditate 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 And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies 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."*

This particular psalm opens with such a ringing declaration of confidence. "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?" And because the Lord is his light, David can walk without stumbling. Because the Lord has been his salvation, his saving grace, time and time again, fear has no rightful place in his heart. God has defended his life so often that dread has lost its grip over him.

So he remembers how evildoers, adversaries and enemies rose against him, and yet they stumbled and fell. "Even when surrounded," he says, "my heart will not fear." And you have to ask the question: Why? Why will you not fear? Because his confidence is not based in his circumstances, but in the presence of God.

And that leads us to this beautiful turning point in v.4 "One thing," he says, "I ask of the Lord, 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."

What is the beauty of the Lord, beloved, that David longs to behold? Because God is not physically visible. Well, it's the beauty of His character, His holiness, His faithfulness, His mercy, His power, His steadfast love. It's the splendor of who God is.

When nothing else around David seems stable or secure, God is. As David worships, meditates, reflects, and communes with God, his attention is slowly driven away from the chaos around him, and fixed upon the constancy within God. And in that sacred gaze, his fears begin to shrink and his confidence begins to rise. He begins to see, not with the eyes of a body that is overwhelmed with danger, but with the eyes of the heart that are illuminated by truth. And the more he understands that his safety, his strength and stability do not lie in changing circumstances, but in an unchanging God.

And that brings us to an important question. What does David mean when he says: "For in the day of trouble, He will conceal me in the tabernacle"? David, of course, is speaking metaphorically here. The tabernacle, in his mind, was the most sacred, protective place that he knew – the place of God's presence, holiness, and protection. Only priests could enter that inner holy place. It was guarded, set apart, holy. So when he says, "He will conceal me in His tabernacle, He will set me high upon a rock," he is describing a spiritual reality. In my day of trouble, God will draw me into the safety of His presence, where the enemy cannot reach me.

And this hiding, beloved, is not God removing His trouble from him. It is God preserving David in the middle of the trouble. What does that look like? It is God guarding his mind from panic. God guarding his heart from fear. God frustrating the plans of his enemies. God giving him wisdom and timing and escape when needed. God sustaining him internally when everything externally is unstable. And this is not in any way some kind of poetic imagination of His. it's a very lived experience.

Because in 1 Samuel 23, when Saul is about to capture David, and suddenly he gets a message that makes him divert his attention. In 1 Samuel 24, Saul walks into the very cave that David is hiding in, and does not see him. You see it again when David is with the camp of the Philistines and yet is kept from destruction. God did not remove the danger. God made David untouchable in the midst of it.

The second metaphor that He uses here is: He will set me high upon a rock. A rock in ancient warfare, was a high, inaccessible place. From there you could see clearly, and the enemy could not easily reach you. And spiritually, this means that God gave David perspective, stability, and confidence about what was happening around him. The trouble remained, but David was no longer emotionally and spiritually at the level of his troubles and circumstances.

And that's why He so boldly says, "I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, even before deliverance." That's His word. He worships as though victory is already certain.

Take this psalm. It was not written in comfort. It was written in a moment of crisis. It was most likely written when David was fleeing from Saul. He was hunted through caves and through the wilderness, betrayed by people that he trusted, separated from worship, living with constant uncertainty. So, when he says, "One thing I ask, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord," he's writing this while he is cut off from it. And this is crucial. David is not kind of imagining something romantic. He's remembering something that he has known and remembers, calls to mind.

Before becoming a fugitive, David had close access to the tabernacle. He knew the priests. He knew every part of the tabernacle. He knew the rhythms of worship. He knew what it felt like to stand in God's courts. Now he has none of it. He's on the run. He's sleeping in caves instead of worshipping in God's courts. He hears the sound of horses' hoofs rather than the bugle sounds of praise. And he's surrounded by enemies rather than worshippers.

And in that place, David realizes something so profound that I think we ought to zero in on as well. What he misses most is not safety. It's not kinship. It's not even revenge. He misses God's presence.

That's why v.4 is the turning point of this psalm. The answer to fear, beloved, is not safety. The answer to fear is nearness to God, proximity to God. He longs for what he cannot presently access, and that is to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

And that's where the psalm shifts. David is no longer describing what he sees around him. He's describing what he sees by faith. Think about that for a minute.

What do the eyes of faith look like to you and to me? Let me give you a few thoughts.

- 1) The eyes of faith choose what to focus on.

David saw the same enemies as everyone else could see. The difference was what he placed before himself. Eyes of faith deliberately place God in the foreground and circumstances and the problem in the background. The issue is real, but my God is present as well.

- 2) The eyes of faith talk back to fear.

David does not say, "I feel no fear." He says, "Whom shall I fear?" He speaks truth to fear. Eyes of faith let scripture have the last word, not our emotions.

- 3) Eyes of faith worship even before the outcome changes.

"I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing," he says, in the midst of his circumstances. Nothing has changed yet. Eyes of faith worship before deliverance, not after.

- 4) Eyes of faith long for God more than relief.

David does not say, "Remove my enemies." He says, "Let me dwell in Your house."

- 5) Eyes of faith want God's presence more than God's solutions.

Why? Because the solutions come out of God's presence. It's a result of being in His presence.

- 6) Eyes of faith rest in God's character and not in circumstances.

The Lord is my light. The Lord is my salvation. The Lord is my defense. This is where his calmness comes from.

I wondered whether we would be able to take a simple test and say: Am I dealing with my situations through eyes of faith or are my eyes locked into my problems, my circumstances, or my situations?

When we don't look through eyes of faith, something very predictable happens. What happens? Fear, anxiety, restlessness, mental exhaustion. All of these things take over. What does that look like if translated into our situations?

Let me give you a few examples:

- It looks like a student staring at an exam timetable, overwhelmed with anxiety about the future.
- It looks like a young professional waiting for interview results, replaying every possible negative outcome.
- It looks like someone in the corporate world facing restructuring and losing sleep over what might happen next month.
- It looks like a business owner watching expenses rise and income fall, constantly imagining the worst.
- It looks like a homemaker carrying silent emotional fatigue and feeling unnoticed and appreciated.

- It looks like a parent worried sick about a child who seems to be drifting.
- It looks like a couple walking through the strain that's in their marriage, where fear and frustration have replaced peace.
- It looks like a person waiting for medical results, unable to think of anything else but a negative result.
- It looks like someone caring for a chronically ill family member, exhausted and emotionally drained.
- It looks like a young adult, confused about direction and feeling left behind in life.
- It looks like someone burdened by debt, bills, or a legal battle that never seems to end.
- It looks like someone battling private temptations, anxieties, or grief that they cannot shake.
- It looks like a believer who feels spiritually dry and wonders why God feels distant.

And in every one of these situations, the common thread is this: the mind is fixed on the problem and not on God.

But when we begin to see through the eyes of faith, something changes. The situation may remain the same, but our inner posture changes. There is a sense of quietness. There's steadiness. There's an ability to pray. There's a strange peace that does not match the circumstance. And this is evidence that our eyes have shifted.

You remember Peter? As long as his eyes were on Jesus, he kept walking on water. The moment his eyes went to the waves and the storm, everything that was around him, he began to sink.

So, the question is not "Are there waves?" The question is, "Where are my eyes fixed?"

So we come back to Psalm 27. David says the Lord is his light, his salvation, and his defense.

When we remember how God has brought us through, fear begins to lose its grip. And that's one thing that we must do in situations like this – remember the past where God has come through for us. It will give you confidence for the present and the future.

Surrounded by difficulty, David shows us what to do. One thing I ask, Lord, let my whole day be centered on You. Let me see life through the prism of Your presence. Why? Because in the day of trouble, God shelters us, lifts us, and gives us a place of rest while He fights the battle. And in that place, David says, "I will sing and shout for joy."

The challenge for us today is not only to acknowledge God in the midst of adversity, but to celebrate his faithfulness publicly.

So beloved, wherever you stand today, let Psalm 27 become your posture – eyes lifted, heart steady, and voice ready to praise. You need to walk out of this sanctuary not rehearsing your fears, but remembering who God is – your light, your Savior, and your defender.

If you follow through to the end of this psalm, in v.13, he says, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." If I didn't believe that I would see God's hand while I was still alive, I would have despaired. But he says, "Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage."

Maybe today, beloved, you walked in here with things that are pressing upon you. You walked in here maybe with fear or dread, or just the crippling feeling of knowing that the circumstances are

overwhelming, and you've just about got your head above water. Maybe you've reached the end of your resources.

Maybe the word for you is: Lift your gaze. Look into the eyes of Jesus through eyes of faith, and let Him take care of your situation. Let Him take care of your problem. Let Him take care of whatever circumstance is threatening you today. "Wait," he says, "wait for the Lord."

I would like to pray with any of you who feel that this psalm has spoken to you. You're saying: this is my situation. I've been focusing on the situation, the circumstance, and that has crippled me, overwhelmed me. And if this word has come to you and you're excited about it, you're saying, "Yes, I want to turn my gaze to you." Those who look to You, scripture says, will be radiant.

If that's the case, just stand where you are, and as we close, I'd like to pray for you. If circumstances are threatening you, just stand where you are.

Heavenly Father, Lord, You see this room, Lord. This is holy ground because You are here. And You see the ones who are standing, Lord, dear sons and daughters who belong to You. But, Master, You also see their situations, their circumstances, the things that are threatening to rob their peace and their joy. And, Lord, Your Word has reminded us, Lord, that our eyes should look to You and that we look at our problems through You.

So, Lord, I pray that everyone who is standing here would just lift their eyes to You, above the hills, the mountains that stand in their way, and just look at Your faithfulness, Your strength, Your peace, Your joy, Your serenity, Your calmness, all of these wonderful attributes. And I pray, Lord, that in Your loving kindness, that You would replace fear with peace and joy and contentment and just the ability to know that You are in control. Lord, lift from sagging shoulders this morning the weight of burdens and replace, Lord, that weight with the weight of Your presence in which they will find a beautiful place, Lord, to rest and be renewed and to recover from what they've been going through.

And then, Lord, I pray that You would help them to see their issues, their problems. If they need strength, give it to them. If they need clarity in the midst of confusion, give it to them.

If they need wisdom to discern, Lord, would You give it to them. If they need peace, Lord, give it to them. If joy has left them, would You give it to them. Everything that they need, Abba, would You bestow through Your loving and kind hands.

And we will always give You the praise, for we pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.
