

Waiting For the Lord

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[0 : 0 0] chapter 27. So if you'd turn with me, if you have your Bibles, I'll be reading from the ESV translation of 14 verse Psalm. And we'll read from verse 1. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Psalm of David. 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 evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing I asked of the Lord that I will seek after, 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 inquire in his temple. For 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. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me. And I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing and make melody to the Lord. Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud. Be gracious to me and answer me. You have said, seek my face. My heart says to you, your face, Lord, do I seek. 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. For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in. Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemy. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries. For false witnesses have risen against me and they breathe out of violence. But I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the

Lord in the land of the Lord. And let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord. Would the Lord add a blessing to the reading of his word?

Our Lord and our God, we thank you for the privilege that it is for us to gather this morning. We recognize that we are gathered in this place, not because of anything of our own doing, but because of the grace of the Lord Jesus that has been poured out upon us through the cross at Calvary. Lord, we ask that as we come to your word, would you take the things of this week, the distractions of our minds, of our hearts, the things that have maybe consumed us this past week, and would you help us, Lord, to focus on your word? And would we let you and what you have to say speak in to our lives and our circumstances? We thank you, Lord, that your presence is with us.

Your presence is with us as believers. Your presence is with us as we gather. Speak to us this morning, we pray. Amen.

[3 : 5 2] The light's blue. There we go. Is that it? Sorry. Do I have to start all that again? Thanks very much.

It's always nice when we come to a psalm and the author identifies himself, because a lot of our psalms, we don't know who they're written by, but of course this is a psalm of David.

We don't know when this is written in David's life. Our psalms aren't given to us really often as a timeline. But there's this common theme in the life of David of adversity and struggle and people standing against him. And I don't want to do anything massively complex this morning, but try and, I want to frame all of this through the last two verses of this psalm, which is waiting upon the Lord, because I think that's really important. I think it's something that culturally we aren't very good at, is waiting, although as British people we do a lot of it. We're not very good at it.

So I want to think about trusting, desiring, and waiting this morning. And we open in these first three verses. I'm just going to reread them. 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 do us assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

[5 : 27] There's a really important affirmation here that we open this psalm with. And it's this really simple affirmation that God is my light and my salvation. Therefore, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Why on earth should I possibly be afraid? It's said that there are two responses in life to problems. And they can be defined as fight or flight. We come to a problem, a scenario, something that scares us, something we're not sure about. And we either choose to hit it head on, or we choose to turn the other way and run away from it. And I think that's true. There's different situations we'll act differently in, different types of people will respond in different ways. But ultimately in situations, we either tackle it head on, or we run away from it. And I think from a spiritual point of view, there are two ways in which we confront issues. We either confront issues in faith or in fear. And I think that the second option for us to choose fear puts the focus on us.

It puts the focus on our situation and what we can do to affect the outcome. I wonder if you're one of these people that micro-analyses situations, that likes to break down every detail. Normally in your bed at two o'clock in the morning, so you can't sleep for the rest of the night. But it can cause such great anxiety because we like to try and work out every little detail.

And then there's a faith response to problems. Now this isn't a response that says, I'm not going to think logically. I'm not going to be nervous. And I'm going to blindly look at this and just say, oh God's got this. But faith sets our mind firstly and primarily on the authority that God has.

It puts a focus on his sovereignty and it acknowledges the goodness of God. You see, a faith response to things affirms the Lord is my light and my salvation.

I'm sure you have heard many sermons where we explain the word light and we explain the biblical use of the word light. We see it. It's such a wonderful, a visual word. I don't know if you're a visual person, but I like light because I can see it. I can tangibly try and understand it.

[8 : 03] But we've got a long tradition through all of scripture from authors before David and after David that uses light. And I imagine a lot of those passages David would have known from when he was a boy. The Lord may have revealed this to him as he was shepherding a flock and he was thinking of light in the middle of the night. However it came to him, these words and this affirmation of the Lord is my light and my salvation brought both peace and joy.

Because the context of this passage is evidently something difficult. David is proclaiming that even in the midst of whatever I stand in right here and right now, whoever stands against me, whatever stands against me, the Lord is with me.

And we have this common theme, don't we, in David's writing. We have, throughout it we have times where he cries out to the Lord, where he laments, but ultimately he comes back to this point of God, I know who you are and I know your place.

I know that you come first. Because he knows God, but also he's seen it worked out in his life so many times. He's seen it when he confronted a lion in the wilderness, all the way through to when he fought Goliath. David has experienced God's presence with him.

And of course, when we talk of light, we talk of light in a complete contrast, in a complete opposite of darkness. I think as church we've often done a poor job of thinking about darkness as if shut the doors, darkness is out there, rather than darkness is human nature as well. Darkness is not something that is alien to a believer.

[10 : 02] David was keenly aware of the darkness that was within men. He was acutely aware of their sinful nature and the darkness that was brought into the world.

In verse 2, when evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh. Verse 10, though my mother and my father have forsaken me. Verse 12, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.

There's all sorts of darkness going on in this psalm. But David is always grounded and comforted by turning his gaze back to God's perfect light.

What is the light of God? Well, of course, it is his holiness. It is his righteousness. It is his grace. He will hide me.

Verse 5, in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. I think David recognizes here that being near to the light of God would reveal the darkness that was within him.

[11 : 15] And he's desperate for more of it. We'll look at it a bit more, but verse 11, teach me your way, O Lord. Lead me in a straight path.

I think there's a bit of a pleading here. God, please. Please would you do this for me? Please help me. Teach me and help me and lead me because on my own I just can't do it.

Please. Please. But it's evident what path David chooses to follow, isn't it? David chooses to follow a path that trusts in the Lord, that follows this declaration of verse 1, the Lord is my light and my salvation.

In John chapter 8, we come to the Feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem, one of the Jewish festivals.

Thousands would flop. People would pitch tents, booths. They would stay in them. Even if you had a house, you would still pitch a tent and you would stay there for seven days. It was super crowded.

[12 : 23] People everywhere. And all of it was as a reminder of the God that was present with his people in the desert. that as they lived in tents, as they were rescued from slavery, God was with them and God provided for them.

And one of the most important parts of that ceremony was the illumination of the temple. And they would light, these candelabras, they would be 75 feet tall, massive things, light, just all about light.

Because they were that reminder of their journey in the wilderness. that the light was said to be so bright that it could be seen throughout the entire city.

To remind them of the pillar of fire that had led them through the wilderness. And it was also a reminder of the promise that God had set that there would be a light sent to renew Israel, release them truly and restore their joy.

and it is in the middle of that festival, it's in the middle of all that going on that Jesus says, I am the light of the world. So Jesus stands in the middle of light, in the middle of remembrance of all that God has done and he basically stands there and goes, me, this, it's all about me.

[13 : 51] All of this points to me. I am the light of the world. I have come into the world of light so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

You see, Jesus is saying just as God has saved the Israelites from slavery, the Father has sent me the light of the world to save humanity from their sin.

I wonder this morning, friends, if your Christian walk is something like David's. Maybe you've been a Christian for many, many decades.

Maybe you've been a Christian for just a few short moments. But I wonder if your journey is one that is marked as David's is with trial and adversity. But too, if it is marked by light, salvation, and a nearness of God.

Because what David does here is he starts with God and who he is. That's where he starts. And he views everything that he confronts through the lenses of who God is.

[15 : 03] See, we come to real problems if we start with our circumstances. We come to real problems if we look at difficult things around us and say, how does God fit into that? But when we start with who God is, all of a sudden everything begins to make a little bit more sense.

So the wonderful affirmation that we can make as New Testament, New Covenant people is that Christ is my light and my salvation. And just to bring this into what we won't close with in the last couple of verses, waiting on God.

I think we learn to wait on God as we trust Him. It is important for us to wait. But we trust and we wait on the Lord by trusting in Him.

By expressing in our lives the great confidence that we have in Him. That indeed the Lord is my light, my salvation, my stronghold.

And we move from these words of affirmation of who God is to this, I guess from verse 4, thinking through a bit more contemplatively this desire for God.

[16 : 21] So if I put something on point one, it would be trust God, something in the second point would be desire God. Verses, verse 4, one thing I have asked of the Lord that I will seek after, 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 inquire in His temple.

My son, Benjamin, is 17 months old. It is a wonderful, we've got another one on the way in about 12 weeks, but it's a wonderful age and he is an absolute joy.

But if there's one thing a child that 17 months old is very good at, it's telling you what they want. So, when I'm trying to get him to eat vegetables, he's very good at making it known he's now done and he wants a yogurt.

And that normally is by everything going on the floor and it being fed to the dog before I can stop it. Or if we go to the park, he makes it very clear what he wants to play on because there's children three times his age and he'll still try and go and push them off so that he can get on the swing next.

They're very, very good children at making known what they want. And if he falls, slips, trips, bumps his head, there's only one thing. That's a cuddle from his mum because a cuddle from his dad just isn't quite the same.

[17 : 41] But children are very, very good at making known to us what they want, what they desire. And here David is making known to us what he desires. What he desires is to live in the tabernacle itself.

He wants to be surrounded by the presence of God, the beauty of God every minute of every day. His desire is to gaze upon the beauty of the lawn.

You see, David knows that the nature and the presence of God is beautiful. And he knows that this beauty can only be seen with faith and trust in God.

and evidently he can think of nothing greater, nothing greater to fill his mind and his heart with than the goodness and the greatness of God.

And it's a very sad reality that there are many who will never know the richness and the goodness of God. and in a way it's a shame that David was under the old covenant and didn't get to see what would come through his ancestor to come.

[18 : 56] The beautiful reality that no longer do we need to dwell in a tabernacle, no longer do we need to draw to the holy of holies because as Christ was sacrificed at Calvary as the curtain was torn into two, there through the spirit everybody who comes by faith to Christ Jesus.

His spirit dwells in us. How sad it is that we have this wonderful New Testament, new covenant promise of the presence of God and yet there are still so many who ignore it and reject it.

Shortly we will come at communion and we will gaze at the beauty the almost bizarre beauty for us of Calvary.

We will gather in remembrance of what the Lord Jesus has done and we will gaze in awe at the God who took on flesh and sacrificed himself for us.

So that's what we do, we pause and we reflect and we gaze at all that Christ Jesus has done for us. Something that no other person ever has or ever will be able to do.

[20 : 20] Might we gaze more? Might we gaze more at the Lord Jesus, the author and the perfecter of our faith? Might we pause more?

I was in, I was preaching in Psalm 85 last week and I was considering the thought that psalm really opens with remembrance and what it's thinking about is remembering all that God has done in scripture, remembering all that God has done in your life and really, really remembering it because when we forget it, we're very forgetful.

I'm very forgetful. but we forget these things and it can change our attitudes and change our hearts. It's so important that we remember what God has done for his people throughout all of history but also what God has done for us and done in our lives.

Why is it important? Why is any of this important? Well, I think we find the answer in verse 5 and 6. For 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 and now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy.

[21 : 41] I will sing and make melody to the Lord. Why is any of this important? Because there is no greater place to be than the shelter of the Lord. Knowing that confidence that faith in the Lord brings.

Is your confidence in the promises of God greater than your fear in times of trial and difficulty?

Are you able to say, whatever I face, whatever comes my way, God goes before me and his promises are true? God is to be able to do.

We wait on God by desiring him. David is telling us of his trust and his longing for God, his longing for communion with God, for his presence and just to overflow and worship him.

God is there. Because that's what there is in the house of the Lord. There is praise and there is worship. And there I will find my refuge and my strength.

[23 : 02] So finally we come to this thought in verses 13 and 14. I'd love to spend more time in the middle of this, but I don't want to keep you all day. So we're going to jump to verses 13 and 14.

And I really think these two verses frame everything else. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage.

Wait for the Lord. One of the things I find so refreshing in these Psalms is that David is praising God for who he is, not just for what he's done.

He's recognizing that the character of God alone is enough for him to be worshipped. It's right that we are thankful when we see God on the move in our lives and the lives of others.

It is right that we are thankful in response to the things that God does. But also we should just worship him because he is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. We should just worship him because he's sovereign and because he's good.

[24 : 17] These reasons should be enough to capture our hearts. Because we get utterly fascinated by people like Job who still continues to worship despite everything he's lost.

Why? Because Job knew God. He knew God, knew who he was, knew that he was good, and knew all of that above anything that he faced ever.

before. And David knows with confidence that I will look upon the goodness of the Lord. And his call to us is to wait. That's what he's saying, I think, to himself, to God, to the reader, us.

Be strong and courageous and wait. He's remembering, isn't he, the words of Joshua 1.9, Have I not commanded you, be strong and courageous.

Do not be dismayed. Do not be frightened. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. He's with you.

[25 : 18] Always, until the end of the ages and beyond. Why? Because his promises are good and true, because he is our light and our salvation and our stronghold.

In 2 Peter, all the promises of God are described as great and very precious. this. And we're told, aren't we, in Hebrews 10, that we must hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

The Lord will never break even one promise. Therefore, like David, we can rely on God to keep his promises. No matter how bleak today might look.

No matter how bleak this week might look. Because also, like David, we can anticipate a bright future because Jesus has promised to return and he has promised to take us with him.

David has a wealth of experience, has a wonderful God-given way with words, and he calls us to seek the Lord.

[26 : 44] Ultimately, that's what the wait on the Lord means, is to seek the Lord. Seek after God and take courage in him. If there's anything you take away from this morning, take that weight on him and take courage.

Charles Spurgeon said, wait at his door with prayer. Wait at his feet with humility. Wait at his table with service.

Wait at his window with expectancy. We've got to be careful. We don't mix this with our cultural idea of wait, which means bang on Netflix for the next three hours and sit and do nothing.

This isn't just a, I'm going to kick back and put my feet up. Because waiting for us is very passive, I think. I think that's our view of waiting, that it's very, very passive.

passive. But it is a waiting that eagerly seeks.

[27 : 54] A waiting that eagerly relies on him. It is a waiting that relies on his strength, not mine. Throughout the scriptures we find this command to wait on the lawn.

And I think that this confident trust that David has is the utter bedrock of that waiting. All of this, Sam, it is this, again, this remembrance of who God is and this prayer for help to God.

Continue with me, keep going with me, I love you God, you're great, I'm not quite sure how things are looking, there's lots of enemies, there's lots of difficulty, but, above all, I trust you, teach me, lead me, help me, I know who you are, I put you in your rightful place, please Lord, teach me and lead me.

I think that's the prayer that David has here. He's looking for wisdom, he's looking for direction, he's looking for protection, and if we believe in God, we will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Waiting on God involves this confident expectation, it is an expectation that is built on our knowledge and trust in God, we can't wait well on God if we do not know God, but we must be confident of who he is and what he is capable of doing.

[29 : 35] So waiting by trusting, by seeking, by desiring, by praying, establishes our faith and it brings peace and it brings stability to our lives.

sometimes we can feel as though God doesn't hear us or see us, can't we? That he's not answering our prayers, maybe in those moments of doubt we even ask, does he really care?

I believe that God is worth you putting your complete and total trust in. I believe that he is worth every ounce of faith that your body could possibly possess because he is the true and the living God.

And we can wait on him in eager expectation and anticipation knowing that he is with us, that he is sovereign, that he will do as he has promised.

And Jesus' resurrection proves that waiting on God's presence is never wasted time. We too, friends, are awaiting people.

[31 : 03] We wait for the return of the Lord. As we look around us and we look to our world, we pray, Lord, would you hurry up? Lord, would you rescue us from the sin-sick world?

God. But for now, friends, would you rest in the promise of God that if you know him, that if you love him, he is your light and your salvation, there is no need to fear.

He is the stronghold of your life, there is no need to be afraid. And this morning, if you don't know the Lord Jesus, if you don't know God, if you don't know his presence, his peace, the salvation that he brings, I urge you, please, would you consider, would you consider that there is no other place that you will find these things?

You may have tried in many places, in many different avenues, none of them lead to anything more than short-term fixes and little things to make us happy in the short-term.

The only thing that will eternally bring us joy and comfort and rejoicing is the Lord Jesus himself, who gave himself for you because he loves you.

[32 : 24] Let's pray. Indeed, light of the world, you step down into darkness.

You eternal, perfect, awesome God. You forfeited your right of heaven to take on flesh, to come as man, to dwell amongst us, to live as we live, to know hunger, to know mourning, to know joy, to know all the things that we might know, yet to live utterly sinless, so that you might pay a price that we might never be able to pay.

We thank you, Lord, that because we know you, because you have drawn us near, we today can affirm that you are our light and our salvation and our stronghold.

Lord, this week, would you help us? Would you draw near to us?

Would you help us in whatever we face? And would you let us know? Would we know in the core of our being to trust you because your promises are good and true and you are always my father.

[34 : 07] In your name I pray. Amen.