

Psalm Ch27v1-14 - Confident Faith In Times Of Fear

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Date: 16 July 2023

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[0 : 00] came expecting to hear somebody else. Sorry about that. But I hope you'll block out the same voice sounds and be able to hear God's word because that's ultimately what's most important, not the person at the front.

And if you do miss any of the Sunday morning talks, so through the summer, Connor started off in 1 John and then Martin spoke last week from Luke's Gospel on the Cross. Any of those talks, they're all available online. There's a new sermon app or a new sermon program on the website which Christopher has been updating. So they're all there. You can listen away and it's a very easy format to click and follow up. So thanks, Chris, again for doing that.

It's a great resource for us to have. So we're going to pray and then look at God's word. Father, thank you. Thank you for your gift to us. Thank you for life itself today, for for sustaining us, for sustaining us, giving us energy and strength to be here with one another. Father, we come and we gather because we are needy people. We cannot live life without you. We need your instruction. We need your word. We need your truth.

For in that is life itself. So be gracious to us as you are. Speak to us afresh this morning. Build us up and help us. And it's in his name we pray. Amen. Well, Psalm 27, as I say, we'll read that in just a minute. But just by way of introduction, what do you fear? Right now as you sit there, what do you fear? What's going through your minds? This week I found myself overwhelmed with fear. Our son, Ethan, who you know, has been living with us for the last 23 years and went off to Canada to work. And driving back from the airport, my mind was racing. What if he doesn't find work? What if something goes wrong? What if he gets involved with the wrong kind of people? What if we don't hear from him?

[3 : 05] What if fear grips us, doesn't it? And paralyzes us. We fear perhaps losing our job or fearing new situations. We fear exams. We fear getting sick. We fear for our children. We fear about our parents. We fear about climate change. We fear about everything. And on our more reflective moments, we fear death itself. So as we begin, what is your fear? What are you worried about?

What are you concerned about? Well, fears are natural and normal emotions. But it's what we do with those fears is what counts. Generally, there are three ways we respond to fears. The first is to fight, isn't it? We dig deep within and we say, I can beat this. We look to inner resources. But what happens when we don't have any fights left? What happens when our fears weaken us? Then what do we do? Well, the second is flight. When we fear, we run as fast as we can in the other direction. But what happens when we run in the other direction? We're actually running into another fear. Sooner or later, wherever we turn, we'll just be running into a new kind of fear. What do we do then? Or the third response is faith, which is what brings us to Psalm 27.

King David, the author of the psalm, responds with confident faith. In the face of fear, there is confident faith. So let's read Psalm 27 together.

The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. [5 : 32] of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear. Though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on 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 sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.

Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me. At his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy. I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hear my voice, Lord, when I call. Be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, seek his face.

Your face, Lord, I will 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, God my Saviour. Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

[7 : 21] Teach me your way, Lord. Lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not hand me over to the desires of my foes.

For false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations. I remain confident of this. I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord. Be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. So as we look together through this psalm, we're going to see three big ideas.

Unwavering confidence, experiencing confidence, and keeping that confidence. So first, David's unwavering, confident faith.

David's confidence is evident, isn't it? Straight from the beginning, verse 1. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life.

[8 : 42] Of whom? Is there anyone who I shall fear? No fear. And it's not that David is immune from trouble.

He lived in a world just like us that brings many kinds of fears. His life is under threat. So look at verse 2. He talks about the wicked advancing against him to devour him.

Verse 5. His days are full of trouble. Verse 6. Enemies surround him. Physical armies. Physical armies.

Verse 12. False witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations. What David is facing is real fear.

And it's enough to make anybody run in fear. But yet he has this remarkable, unwavering confidence. Look at verse 2.

[9 : 45] When the wicked advance against me to devour me, well, it's my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear.

Even though war break out against me, even then, I will be confident. It seems nothing and no one will defeat him or destroy him.

It's almost he sounds indestructible that not even death can overcome him. In fact, he's so certain, verse 5, that when the day of trouble comes, he will keep me safe in his dwelling.

He will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Whatever trouble comes his way, no matter how big or how great, who it is or what it is, he has an unwavering confidence that he can say, verse 13, I remain confident of this, absolutely sure, no doubt, I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Isn't that the kind of confidence we want in life? That whatever fear we may face, be it loneliness, illness, or some future thing that may come, or even death itself, that we could say with absolute certainty, my heart will not fear.

[11 : 37] I will be confident. When the day of trouble comes, that we will be able to say, I will be safe.

So how can I, how can we together, have unwavering confident faith in the face of our fears? Well, that brings us to our second big idea, experiencing confident faith.

David's confidence is not in himself. This is not bravado. It is in a person, isn't it? Verse 1. The Lord is my light and salvation.

Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?

David's faith is rooted and grounded in a person, in the Lord, the one who is steadfast and loyal, faithful and unflinching.

[12 : 48] But not only that, David's confidence is not just something present, it is also something future. Look at verse 3.

He says, Though war break out against me, I will be confident. In the day of trouble, verse 5, he will keep me safe.

Now for David, that was partially true, wasn't it? We know of many accounts of where he defeated many enemies and won many battles.

But yet when he fought the greatest enemy, when he faced the greatest battle, when he was confronted with death, he lost.

David died. Because none of us can beat or defeat death. You see, David's confidence confidence was not in himself. He looked in faith to one who would defeat death for him.

[13 : 50] One who would overcome his greatest fear. He looked to the one who would provide eternal security and safety. You see, David's faith, his confidence, was in the Lord.

And our confidence is in the same Lord, in Jesus Christ. Look with me, please, to Mark's Gospel, chapter 10.

You can keep a finger in Psalm 27, but go to the New Testament, to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10.

Here Jesus is talking with his disciples and he predicts his own death.

He's talking about himself. And he says in verse 33, we are going up to Jerusalem. Jerusalem would be the place of his execution.

[15 : 14] And the Son of Man, speaking of himself, will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him.

You see, it's remarkable that the experience of Jesus here that he describes was just like King David.

The wicked came to devour Jesus. The enemies plotted to kill Jesus. False witnesses slandered Jesus.

The day of trouble came to Jesus and he died. He was executed by his enemies. But Jesus adds something else, doesn't he?

Look at the end of verse 34. With great hope, three days later, the Son of Man will rise. And Christ was raised to life.

[16 : 25] He faced into death. He fought the greatest enemy. he faced the greatest battle of all and he won. Though the armies of death and evil came against him, his enemies stumbled and fell.

Though Satan made a war against him, he was exalted above his enemies. What David said was true but only true through his faith in Christ.

that's why we look in faith to Christ. Our confidence is in one who has secured our salvation, who's defeated our greatest enemy, who has crushed death itself.

Christ is our stronghold over our life. Which means we can face into any fear with confident faith.

No matter what life may throw at us, we can have confidence. So how can we experience this confident faith that David has?

[17 : 36] Well let's go back to Psalm 27. Two things that will help us to experience this confident faith as we look in faith to Christ.

first, let us make Christ the focus of our gaze. Make Christ the focus of your gaze.

Look at verse 4. One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

To gaze on the beauty of the Lord. What does that mean for you and I? Well, let me try and explain.

I love, as you know, to go walking in the mountains and to reach the top is breathtaking. To stand there all alone and see those panoramic views are captivating.

[18 : 53] Just for a moment to stand and gaze at the beauty all around makes everything else fade into insignificance. The beauty can be so captivating that you're no longer fearing the swirling winds or fearing the drop that is the other side of you.

The beauty captures your heart. Or think of it like this. If you were to cross one of those rope bridges over a deep cavern, it's important what you gaze at.

Don't look down. Of course, we all look down, don't we? We look around. We fear. We panic.

We stumble. But if we fix our gaze on what's before us, on the person who's already walked across that bridge for us, our gaze is fixed and we will walk confidently.

You see, we are to gaze on the beauty of Christ. To gaze is to linger, to meditate, to think upon, to be captivated by the greatness and the glory of who Jesus is, because it is only the beauty of Christ in all his magnificence, that will dispel our fears.

[20 : 21] Gaze. Keep looking at what Christ has done. Open up the word of God and see Christ in his beauty who comes to deal with our sin and deal with our greatest fear, death itself, who dies our death and rises again from the grave and gives us the gift of his spirit and fills us with grace and mercy and love and compassion.

The one who secures our eternal life with him forever in his eternal kingdom gaze at the beauty of Jesus.

You see, whatever we are gazing at captures our thoughts and our minds. love so focus your gaze on the beauty of Christ and your fears will be dispelled.

Not only are we to gaze, we are to make Christ the desires of our hearts. Look at verse seven. hear my voice when I call Lord. Be merciful to me and answer me.

[21 : 43] My heart says of you, seek his face. Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me.

Seek his face. Well, it's not literally to look at the face of Christ or to hang a picture up at the wall of some pretend image of Christ and gaze at his face all day long.

No, to seek his face is to desire to be in his presence, to be with Christ. If I said to Kirsty, she's heading off today to go and visit her family, and I ring her up in the week and say, I long to see your face.

Well, I hope I want to see your face, but it's not just her face. I want her presence. You see, to seek Christ's face is to seek his presence, to be with Christ where he is, where there are no fears.

Look back at verse four. One thing he says, I ask of the Lord, this only do I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

[23 : 03] This is our ultimate goal and desire, to be with Christ, in person, to see him, to live with him forever, in that new and eternal kingdom where there are no more fears.

No more fears. you see, whatever our heart's desire is, there you will follow. Whatever it is that captivates your heart, there you will give your time and your priority.

So if your desire is, I want to get married, or if your desire is to get rich, or to be healthy and beautiful, or to be happy, if that's your priority, that's where you will be driven every day of your life. And it's not that any of those things are bad things, the problem is every one of those things are temporary. They don't last.

They're like the mist that comes in the morning and is burnt up by the morning sun. As one writer put it, death will blow up all our hopes and put an end to all our enjoyments.

[24 : 27] Death will take us from these things, or death will take these things from us. You see, when we lose something precious to us, hope is replaced by fear.

We've lost the very things that we put our hope into. Wherever your heart's desire is, that's where you will be driven to.

But it's all temporary. It doesn't last. Death takes our security and our safety. But if Christ is our heart's desire, then whatever we lose, we do not need to fear.

Look at verse 10. Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

Even if I should lose my parents, my spouse, my job, my health, even if I were to lose my own life, I can never lose the Lord.

[25 : 39] because the Lord will never forsake me. The Lord will always receive me. My confidence remains. The only thing that death will ever do is fulfill my desire because it will bring me into the very presence of Christ himself.

You see, whatever our heart's desire is, whatever we follow, there we will go. So make Christ the desire of your heart.

And as he fills your heart, your fears will be banished. One writer put it like this.

Follow with me on screen. Man's days on the earth are out of the shadow. It was never designed by God that this world should be our home.

The future world, heaven itself, the new heavens and the new earth, was designed to be our settled and everlasting home.

[26 : 55] To go to heaven fully to enjoy God is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, husbands, wives, children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows.

But the enjoyment of God is the substance. Everything we have, everything we hold is temporary. will be banished. So, experiencing confidence, how do we keep this confidence?

repentance. Well, Psalm 27 is a prayer, isn't it? They're all prayers, they're all cries from the heart to the Lord.

Verse 7, hear my voice when I call Lord. Be merciful to me and answer me. You see, none of us knows what we're going to face this week, what's going to be before us next month, what's going to happen next year.

[28 : 25] But we do know that in some shape or form, fears will come upon us, and they will grip us, and they will paralyze us. But it's not so much that we have fears, but it's what we do with our fears.

And here's what the Psalm has been teaching us, that when fears come upon us, run in faith to Christ. Christ, our confidence, Christ, our only hope in life and death.

Christ, the one who has gone before us, who has gone through life. He has faced our greatest fears for us. He has conquered them all. He is my confidence.

confidence. So when fears come upon you this week, let your fears be your friend.

Let your fears bring you back to Christ. Rather than be overwhelmed by fear, refocus your eyes, reorientate your heart, make the beauty of Christ your focus and the gaze upon him will dispel your fears.

[29 : 46] Make the glory of Christ the desire of your heart and your fears will be banished. How do we do it? Well, it's all through prayer.

Patient prayer. Look at verse 11. This is what we need to pray. We come to God in prayer and we say, teach me your way, Lord.

Lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not hand me over to the desire of my foes. For false witnesses rise up against me spouting malicious accusations.

Do you see in his helplessness and in his weakness, he leans on the Lord and trusts in him. Teach me.

So, let me encourage us all, don't hide your fear. It's normal and natural to fear. But bring all those fears and cry them out to God in prayer and he will help you.

[31 : 01] He will make your path straight. And as we pray, we pray patiently, verse 14, wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

The Lord knows you, the Lord sees you, he hears your cry and he will answer. He is with you now and one day we will see him forever and we'll be with him.

So, let me ask us, what is your fear today? What is it that is gripping your heart and paralyzing you? Let's come now to the Lord in prayer and ask for his help, that we will gaze on his beauty and that the desires of our hearts will be focused on him.

Let's do that right now. Tell your fear to the Lord.

[32 : 35] him what worries you and what concerns you.

Tell him your anxious thoughts. Ask him that he will help you to gaze on the beauty of Christ who has given us life and has conquered death who reigns over all.

Ask God to change your heart that your desires will be for him. For all else that we have in this world is temporary.

It will not last. But Christ is eternal. thank you Lord that you hear our prayer.

That you are concerned for us. Wait for the Lord. Be strong, take heart and wait for the Lord.

[34 : 25] Amen. We're going to sing in response a song that puts into words what is on our hearts.

when I fear my faith will fail Christ will hold me fast.

When the tempter would prevail he will hold me fast. I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path for my love is often cold.

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