

My Light and my Salvation

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back to God's word and turn back to the chapter we had, the book of Psalms and Psalm 27. The book of Psalms and Psalm 27.

Looking at the whole Psalm today. For the sake of a text, we could take the last two verses. 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. I wonder if those of us here today who are Christians, if we're being honest with ourselves, and only you know if you are just now, I wonder how often we find ourselves thinking or going through a situation, something similar perhaps to this where we see or find ourselves thinking.

If only I had faith like that person. If only I believed like they believe. If only I was so confident and so sure like they are.

I doubt they ever have worries or concerns about anything. I doubt they ever worry about their salvation. I doubt they ever worry about assurance.

[1 : 24] I doubt they ever worry if God is still hearing their prayers. That person, they serve in so many ways. They look like they are just the best Christian in the congregation or in the island or whatever your situation may be.

I bet they have never had sleepless nights of worry or pain or struggle like I have. I wonder if we ever thought something like that.

As we see ourselves in our situation and see ourselves when we're struggling or we feel far from God or when our life is dark for whatever reason, we find ourselves saying, what is wrong with me? I'm just not like so-and-so or that person. When we begin perhaps to read the psalm we have here, we might well be thinking we're reading the words of a man that has no worries in life, no problems, no pressing concerns.

He starts off, we see the first verse of such a beautiful and clear declaration of the power and strength of God in his life. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

[2 : 39] Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? A man clearly with no issues, no worries, a man who is confident in all that he is and all that he says.

Of course, once we go on through the psalm and delve a bit deeper into what David is saying here, we see very quickly that these statements are true, but they're only true because they're being tested in his life.

He only says these things about God because he knows them to be true, and he only knows them to be true because they have been tested by all the awful, tough, painful situations David has had to go through.

He is speaking from experience. As we delve into the psalm and delve into the words of David, I want us to have two thoughts in mind.

In the first half of the psalm, we see David praising God in three different ways for his provision towards him. Then the second half of the psalm, we then see David's, as it were, perhaps private prayer.

[3 : 55] So the first half is his outward declaration of trust and hope in God. And the second half, it's almost, it turns personal very quickly and it talks about his own personal struggles, worries, and thoughts.

So that's our two hangers on today. The first half of the psalm, the God of salvation, God's provision. The second half, David's prayer.

In this first half, in verses one down to verse six, we do see this clear outward profession of trust from David, where we see him saying in these wonderful ways how he trusts in God.

And as we look at these words and look at how David puts his trust in God, let's take time this day to offer up our own praise to God.

For what David says of God is true for him, but it's also true for every believer here this day. That the God who was a God of David and a God to David is also God to us.

[5 : 06] The God that David praises in these verses is also the God that we praise. And the same reasons he has are the same reasons we should have this day.

So as we look at these, these three or four reasons, let's have hearts full of praise as we look to our God. The first one is what we have in the first, first verse.

David praises God for being his light and his salvation. What a powerful, vivid way of describing his God. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

In the hours, in the days, in the weeks perhaps, after that phone call or that message or that situation, where we find ourselves lost and confused, thrown into darkness, thrown into pain and worry.

As we sit and as we realise our life perhaps has fallen apart in some way or another, we all realise very quickly the extent of our own ability, the extent of our own strength.

[6 : 17] We realise very quickly how unable we are to help ourselves in any real useful way. then we come to this verse and we see that in God we have light.

Pure, perfect, unchanging, unfaltering, never dimming light in this first verse of this psalm.

Elsewhere, we see in Psalm 36, that's just one example, God again described in terms of his light, Psalm 36 says, for with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.

God brings clarity and sense and hope to situations that are otherwise without any illumination, any hope or any help.

If right now we have Jesus as our saviour, then we have a promise of the words of Jesus in John 8 and verse 12 where Jesus says these wonderful words and famous words, I am the light of the world.

whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. For David, God is his only source of light.

[7 : 32] The Lord is my light. Even in his darkness and his misery, he trusts in the light of God. David, of course, also holds God as his only source of salvation.

salvation. We know in the Psalms and we know in his life in general in Scripture that David had a life faced every day almost it seems with various different types of enemies.

There always seems to be an army at the gate for David that's coming from outside forces, inside forces, even we know his own son rebelling against him.

Even in that situation, David is still able to say and to declare clearly and proudly that God is his salvation. That God has kept him.

God has saved him. God has not let him down or let him go. As we sit here this afternoon as we think of these words, our mind should be thinking to our saviour, the God who saved David is the God who sent his son into this world to save us.

[8 : 47] Just as David trusted God as his only source of light, his only source of salvation, we true must have that same trust. Our saviour came into this world to save us, the one through whom and for whom all creation was made, he came to save you and to save me, if we trust in him this morning.

this is not new information for us but this should blow our minds every time we hear it. It should cause us to stop and to think and to worship God every time we hear it.

The one who is right now at the right hand side of the father that he is your eternal saviour. He is your eternal light, eternal saviour.

He is the one who has promised to always walk alongside you. David trusted God as his light and his salvation.

That is the same for us today. In our saviour we have a perfect light and a perfect saviour. David then goes on to describe God in a different way.

[10 : 03] This time the second half of verse 1 he says the Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?

Or literally the stronghold of my life and the source of my confidence. We have in verses 2 and verse 3 this image described to us of an advancing army.

In verse 2 and verse 3 an army coming as it were even to devour him and to destroy him, to eat up his flesh. But David we see is confident.

Why is he confident? He's confident because of the end of verse 1. Because where is he? He is residing in the stronghold of God. He is living his life in the refuge of God.

The place God has put him, the place God has made for him. God has done. The image here comes from the idea of a structure built into a rock face.

[11:11] That's the idea of words being used here. It's something that's been carved into the side of a rock face. Something that will not be moved. The stronghold that David trusts in, it will not be moved.

It's the strongest possible structure you can think about. It's the exact same words that's used in Psalm 18 and verse 2 where it says, the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge.

You don't need me, a student, to come here and tell any one of you how faltering and unreliable our own self-made structures are. saying to the children just now, we think we know which way is best. We think we try and build our own walls and do our own thing and that will be good enough. When reality hits us, we realise our efforts mean nothing.

Our stronghold falls to bits. As soon as the enemy comes against us and batters other walls, they topple over and we are left exposed and terrified.

[12:25] by trade, my dad is what he does dry stone walling in a previous life and one summer I tried to go with him and try to help him fix a wall.

I thought my wall was quite good actually. I started to spend a few hours doing it, quite proud of myself. He looked at it and just laughed and just pushed a bit and that bit fell down and that bit fell down and three hours of work were just gone.

I have no clue what I was doing. No clue. If we try and build our own thing and look after ourselves as best we can, we will realise very quickly that our stronghold is not up to task.

Whereas David, he trusted in the stronghold of God. We have to trust that our rock, our saviour is sufficient enough to protect us because it's true.

We know it's true. the wind will batter against us, the rain will come in. So often we may feel cold and feel lonely but ultimately we will be protected if Jesus is our saviour.

[13:34] If Jesus is our immovable rock, if we trust in him as our foundation, we can trust that we will never be moved. And this is not just a nice pep talk for us on a Sunday. The Christians here know this to be true.

Christians here have been a walk for years know this to be true. Even in the hardest part of their lives, when the wind and rain is battering against them, he has kept them safe.

David trusts in God as his light and salvation, as his stronghold, as the source of his confidence.

Then we find, lastly, in verses four down to verse six, we see that in God, David finds his ultimate source of joy.

In God's presence, David finds his ultimate source of joy. So in these verses, in verses four to six, David brings the imagery of the house of God, of the tabernacle, of being in the presence of God's people and worshipping God together and of serving God at his tabernacle, later the temple.

the place where, for the people of Israel, God met with them. David is here talking about that in God's presence he finds his ultimate source of joy.

[15:02] But where God is, that David is happy there. But here, David could worship God freely, safe from the worries and chaos that was around him.

God's presence in God's presence. In other words, David's desire is to be continually in the presence of God. For there, and there alone, David knows he finds his ultimate joy, his only true joy.

If we look at these verses, verses four to six, and see the confidence and the trust that David has in God, and the sureness of David's trust that in God's presence in God's temple, he will have safety and security and joy.

And just think for a second that David had to worship God through the priests of the temple.

Whereas us here today, even in this congregation, that we have greater access to God than David ever did.

That we right now in our pews here have greater access to God than David ever, ever did. That right now we can pray to our God and know for a fact he hears us.

[16:15] Not requiring any sacrifices, not requiring any more procedures or rituals, all fulfilled in our Saviour. And because of his perfect finished work, we right now can come before God and know we are in his presence.

For right now, as we worship together, we know God is here with us. Not in some general sense, but in a real sense. not in some new age sense, but in a real biblical sense.

Our God is with us because we are here as a people of God. That's no small thing. And if David found joy in the presence of God, even in the temple and sacrifice system, if that was enough for him, then we have so much more than that.

We should be much more joyous than even David. knowing that wherever we are, that we are in the presence of God. Why? Because the Spirit lives in his people.

For right now, if you're a Christian, the Spirit, he has made his home in you, as John tells us again and again. He has made his home in you.

[17:31] And because of that, God is always with you. He is renewing you day by day, minute by minute, making you more and more like your Savior.

You are always in the presence of your God and that should give us joy. That should give us joy. It doesn't all the time, but it should. even when we are at our darkest point, our furthest point, when we feel as if we've just gone too far, that's when we have to realize that in the end, God's truth triumphs over our feelings.

It even triumphs over our own present situation. God will never stop the work he has started in his people until he takes us home to be with himself. We will falter, we will fail, and we do daily, daily. But that does not change reality. In God's presence, we should find our joy. And because our God is with us continually, we should always realize that we are always in his presence.

If David found joy occasionally in the temple, if David found joy by going to the temple and being around God's presence in such a veiled way, we have God in an unveiled sense.

[18:53] There's no more curtain that's been torn into. We have access to the Father through the Son. We should make the most of that. We have no need for sacrifices.

We have no need for any other song and dance. The gospel is simple and the reality of God's presence of his people is simple. There's much deep theology. We can discuss this for days and days.

But at the basis of it all, God now lives with his people. In the midst of our problems, in the midst of our trials, in the midst of our pain, we have the promises and encouragement of his word.

So there are some of David's outward proclamations. He trusts in God in this wonderful, clear way. God's is light and salvation. God's a stronghold.

In God's presence, he finds his joy. Then when we look to verses 7 to the end, we see a marked change in the tone.

[20:04] Verses 1 to 6, it all seems to be going quite well for David. But in verse 7, Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud. The tone has changed completely here.

We've gone from a public declaration about God. Now in verse 7, it's almost a private prayer to God. See, now in verse 7, he's speaking to God personally.

Hear, O Lord. He's saying, hear, O y'all, when I cry to you. Speaking to God, you have said, my heart says to you. Verses 7 onwards, we now have a privilege of hearing a private prayer of David to God.

He's now talking directly to his God. And we could say, it's David being a hypocrite.

The first half of the psalm, he's praising God. And the second half of the psalm, he's crying out for help and mercy and not seeming to be in a good situation with God.

[21:13] How do these two things gel together? Well, we know we do because we know in our own life, in our own experience, is this not true? That we can all say verses 1 to verse 6 and mean them.

That we can, the Christians here can proclaim that God is our light, God is our salvation, God is our stronghold. That in God's presence, I do find joy. But at the same time, we are praying, Lord, help me.

Lord, hear when I cry aloud. Be gracious to me and answer me. These two halves of the psalm, we're not opposed to each other.

In reality, it's quite the opposite. They go well together. It's the experience of every Christian here, every Christian in all of time. But we proclaim our trust in God, our truthful, honest trust in God.

At the same time, we pray to him to be near us. We pray to him to not abandon us, to be close to us. We pray and we trust that he hears our prayers.

[22 : 22] I guess what comes to mind is in Mark 9, the words of the one who says, Lord, I believe.

Help my unbelief. And that, if we're honest, applies to every Christian here today. We can all agree with David in the first six verses. But then all agree also of David in the last few verses.

We all trust the promises of God, but at the same time, we desperately need his constant help. We constantly need his hand as it were in our hand, carrying us along.

We declare our confidence in God, and at the same time, we're constantly crying out to him to keep us. Again, not being two-faced, but being realistic. This is the Christian's experience.

We always need that help, that reminder that he is our saviour, that he hears our voice. In verse 9, in particular, he says, David says, he prays to God, you almost hear the sadness and pain.

[23 : 30] 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.

Just as it is for David, I'm sure it's true for all here today who are Christians, it's when we feel furthest from God, when we feel furthest away from him, that we find it so hard to trust in his promises.

When we feel furthest from God, we find it so hard to open our Bibles and to even pray, if we're being honest. The reality is that at that time, we have to go back to God's word.

In fact, the further we feel away from God, the further we have wandered perhaps away from God, the more we need to come back to his word. And not trust in our situation, not trust in our feelings, which change day by day and minute by minute.

I said trust in the sure promise of God and his word. David's simple advice to those who are struggling is trust in the promises like he has in verses one to six.

[24 : 44] Trust in the promises of God. Know them to be true, but also pray to your God who hears you. Although verse seven may sound desperate, the word he uses in verse seven, look what he calls God.

He calls God capital L-O-R-D, Yahweh. He uses God's covenant, personal name. David addresses God with a name God addresses his people with.

The name God gave to his people. The personal, close, covenantal name of God. Even though David is in pain and whatever situation he may be in, he still knows God is the God who keeps his promises.

God is the God of the covenant. God is the God who has a people he promises to protect and to keep. Again and again, even in this section, he uses the personal name of God.

God's personal name. David addresses him by that. And we see as we come to the last few verses of this psalm, we see that even in his prayers of help, that he still has hope.

[26 : 04] Even in a situation that reads quite dark and it seems quite desperate, where he feels abandoned and perhaps forsaken, where he feels as if God has hidden his face from him, still in verse 13, we see this proclamation.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

God is still with me. My time is aware it is not up yet. He has not abandoned me yet. Why does he believe it? He believes it because of the first six verses.

Because God has been faithful to him time and time again. David knows that even in the midst of his current situation, God will again prove faithful. In verse 13, David is not trusting on his own merits, his own efforts in any way.

But he believes what he believes because he knows who God is. Look at the final words of the psalm.

[27 : 18] The final verse where David, he's encouraging himself and encouraging all those who would sing and read this psalm after him. The final words of this psalm.

Final words of this prayer. Wait for the Lord. Be strong. Let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord.

Again, David is not just throwing out inspirational verses for us to cling on to. David is speaking from experience. David is telling all who will listen to him that this is true.

God will not leave you. God has not forgotten you. God has not abandoned you. God has not abandoned you. God has not abandoned you. Because he is faithful. Because he is Yahweh. As he

says again in verse 14, the first word there, wait for the Lord.

Wait for the God who is the God of your father, the God who has promised you and your people life. Wait for him. Be strong. Let your heart take courage.

[28 : 27] And all this is incredible good news for those here who are Christians. This is incredible. Even though we are going through perhaps a painful situation, even this week if we go through a situation that we're yet to encounter, this psalm should encourage us to trust in God and all that he says and all that he is.

But we have to ask the question, it's an honest question. The Christians here, we have our hope in one source and that source is Jesus and Jesus alone.

The Christian and the non-Christian, I guess almost every way we will face the same challenges. Worries about family, worries about jobs, worries about economy, worries about money, worries about this or that.

We all have the same worries. We all face the same problems. There's only one difference between the Christian and the non-Christian is that the Christians have their base on the stronghold of David. That we trust in our immovable saviour. We don't just say this to keep ourselves happy for this week. We say this because it's true. This is not just some dry theological pep talk.

[29 : 48] This is God's living word speaking to us. And because God's living word tells us it's true, and because every Christian here knows it to be true, we know it's right and we know it's true.

My question, my genuine question is, I don't know actually anybody here hardly. A few faces apart from that, I don't know. I don't know who you are or where you stand with God. And supposing I did know you, in the end, only you can answer that question anyway.

Where is your security? When the earth, as it were, gives way, when everything goes wrong in your life, where is your hope? Your friends and family, if they don't fail you, they can only go so far to help you.

But reality is, at the end of the day, if you don't have Jesus as your only source of strength, if Jesus is not your light and your salvation, if Jesus is not your stronghold, not your strong rock where you take refuge, then you have no hope, no real hope.

I'm just passing through this Sunday. But take God's word for God's word. This is your chance.

[31 : 10] You are here with life. You are here. You are listening to God's word. If nothing else, listen to this. You have to place your trust in the only one who can save you, in Jesus.

As simple as that. That's the gospel. Trust in him alone. There's no other song, no other dances, no secret handshakes or funny things to be done. That is the gospel.

Believe in Jesus and be saved. You've heard this a thousand times, I'm sure. It's the only gospel anyone who stands here has to give you. Trust in the words of David in this psalm.

That he, even in a dark situation, in a tough situation, even he, did not lose the reality that God is his saviour. That he trusted in God.

Don't waste another day. Don't waste another week of your life without knowing Jesus as your light, as your salvation.

[32 : 10] Please, seriously don't. We can get so comfortable with respect in our routines, in our suits, in our pews. We get so comfortable we forget how real this is. This is life and death.

This is reality. There's no way of saying it. Listen to the word of God and listen as you hear about the wonder of your saviour.

The one who has done all so that you may be saved if only you would come and put your trust in him. Again, don't let this chance pass you by.

Speak to a Christian here, you know. Speak to one of the elders. Time is short. Time goes in so quickly. Come to know Jesus as your saviour, as your rock, as your light, whilst you still have an amazing opportunity to do so.

Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.