

Take Courage

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 July 2024

Preacher: Doug Plank

[0 : 00] Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. It's so good to sing, to worship our Savior together,! And certainly brings, on behalf of the team, brings us such, such joy to be able to lift our voices with you.

! It really is such a treasure. Here I am. I think it's seven years. I think we calculated between the historians. We figured out we've been here at least seven times. But I personally was here with my wife, Brenda, in February here for vacation. And that was a delight to be with you. I really, for such a long time, have wanted to come just to come, just to be here, to enjoy the Bahamas when you're supposed to be in the Bahamas, in the February time frame when it's cooler and nicer and not 900 degrees and 100% humidity. So we had such, my wife and I had such a delightful time and we worshiped with you again in February. But again, I come just so grateful that I get to share time with you again.

And let's turn in our Bibles to Psalm chapter 27. And I do bring, before we get started here, as you're turning in your scriptures, I do bring greetings on behalf of Crossway Church, on behalf of the fellow pastors, elders there, and the dear people I serve and love in Pennsylvania. I bring greetings. We share such a sweet bond, as Cedric mentioned, as Pastor Moss mentioned. We have served and have loved and have built relationship with you over these many years. And these are precious bonds. They're gospel bonds. These are the kind of bonds that have meaning and purpose that will stretch beyond time. You realize that? That what we're building and doing here from person to person, from believer to believer, from heart to heart, and what we do for these children and what we do together in the service of Jesus Christ, these are gospel bonds. This is a partnership that honors our Savior and our King. And these are things that will go far beyond our lifespan. So I'm just so, so pleased that we get to be here again. And I bring, on behalf of the church and the pastors, our greetings. We bring our blessing and encouragement to you. And we come, this time, 16 of us, one will be joining us today, 16 of us from Pennsylvania and one from New Jersey, to serve the Lord together to be with you. So we're so grateful that we get to be here. And Cedric, just want to encourage you, brother, what a stalwart soldier in the Lord you have been.

To serve with you, to have witnessed you now over many years, I have seen you stand your post in such a faithful way. And you are being served and loved by this brother, he and his family. And I'm very grateful that I get to call you my friend as well. So praise the Lord. Let's turn in our Bibles, if you haven't already, Psalm chapter 27, because I'd like for us in a few moments to read this all together. If you have an English Standard Version, ESV version of the Bible, we'll be reading from that in a few moments. And as you turn there, as we prepare to read that together out loud, I cannot help but be stirred as I start here to think about battlefield speeches. Have you ever watched a war movie? Have you ever heard or even possibly the Shakespeare's Henry V, the St. Crispin speech? I couldn't share that with you. I do not have that memorized. But these are some of the speeches that are so stirring. They're profound moments. You think about it, when men are gathered at the field of battle, about to go onto the battlefield, likely to lose life or limb for the cause of king of country, and right there before the moment of battle, the commanding officer or the king, or I think of William Wallace from Braveheart before the Scots battle against the English, or I think of American General George Patton before they stormed the invasion of Normandy in World War II. You know, these are the moments where the general or the king would gather the troops and they would stir their troops, ready them, prepare them for courage to enter into the chaos of battle. And it is quite a moment. I think we can all think for a moment of what it must have been like for an army, a man, a soldier, a young man to stand there moments before the first shots would be fired. You know,

[4 : 21] I've often thought about that. My grandfather served in World War II in the South Pacific, and he fought against the Japanese for the American Marine Corps. And in his time, I just think

about that. What must that have been like to be my young grandfather? Moments before the battle, moments before they would take the beach where the Japanese bullets are flying at their ships, what that must have felt like? Just the feeling of, and I can almost imagine the feeling of your stomach turning in knots, the feeling of your knees about to buckle out from underneath you, the fear of death. It's a profound feeling. I think we can all understand that. I'm sure many of us in this room have had a moment, a brush with death, a moment where we maybe came this close to an accident, or maybe something happened that we realized we were within moments of something terrible happening to us, but the Lord spared it.

And we felt those feelings where our stomach drops out, the pain, the fear of death. And the men who were there before the battle, their sacrifices, once they went onto the battlefield, their sacrifices were noble, and their feats of courage were profound. It earned something right to give an honor to a veteran who has stood his ground, a stalwart soldier. And they are to be honored and thanked for their courage and for their sacrifice. Indeed. But soldiers and battlefield veterans are humans too. They're not superhuman, right? There's not something that we cannot understand, that we cannot feel like they're, like what they have experienced. It's a universal experience in battle that we have to face our fears. We have to press through them in order to reach the goal, the purpose, in the case of battle, to win the battle, right? To save our families. And I would argue that, in fact, the need for Christian courage is actually greater than the courage that one you can imagine even a soldier might need before the day of battle. And I would argue the case that Psalm 27 is one of those battlefield speeches, in a sense, where David is commanding his own soul, much as General Patton might command his troops, calling them to courage before they would step on the field of battle.

And I believe that the Christian requires even greater courage, even greater endurance than the veterans or those who have stormed actual battlefields. Because many men can command their courage and fight on a physical battlefield. There's really nothing supernatural or special about men going to war.

They've been doing it from the beginning. It doesn't take the Holy Spirit or power from God for a man to storm the field of battle. Pagans have been doing it for millennia. They have not had the Spirit.

[7 : 13] But I would say to endure the Christian battle, the warfare that the Christian is called to, actually requires the supernatural help from God. Therefore, the stakes are higher. The power that is needed, the courage, the stirring of courage is much more required for the believing heart to walk onto the daily battlefields that you and I have to walk through. Greater courage is needed. More endurance is required. And it takes a lot more than just a rush of adrenaline or a stirring battle speech to get us onto this battlefield. This is a battle. Think about it. The battle that we wage, the war that we're in, that we are locked in as believers, which is a winning war, by the way, because our Savior has already cut the path. He's already fought the battle. He said from the cross, it is finished. So the battle that we wage, the war that we're in, is a finished work. But this battle that we're in day by day requires nothing less than the power and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. So this is the way of courage.

This is what we're called to. It's a path. It's a battle. But it requires courage. So we're going to take courage, the title of the sermon. We're going to take courage. And we're going to learn from David's example and hear from this stirring speech, this lyric, this song that he wrote about courage.

I'm going to read this together out loud. Psalm 27. So if you have a scripture open to this chapter, go ahead and read with me. Okay? Or if you don't, just listen. Here we go. Chapter 27. 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 have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after. Then 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.

[9 : 49] 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 enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries. For false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. 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. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen. Well, this is the way of courage. David has commanded his own soul in this text to take courage. And by extension, we ourselves need the same call to attention, much as a general to a soldier. So we receive from King David this call to courage this morning, to take courage. So here's the theme that we're going to be looking at together from this text. I believe the theme is this. Take courage. The Lord stands at the end of enduring obedience. Take courage. The Lord stands at the end of enduring obedience. And we're going to break down this text into three parts, starting with verses one through three. This point is the confidence behind courage. There must be confidence that stands behind courage, behind it. Confidence is required.

If there's going to be courage, there must be confidence. And these opening verses of the psalm contain some inspiring declarations. These are lines of victory that are to be sung, that are to be ringing out with notes of victory after the routing of an enemy. So you just look with me. Verse one through three, David declares that he has nothing to fear because of the Lord, Yahweh, God, the one true God is his light, is his salvation, is the stronghold of his life. And if God, the true and living God, is these things for David and for God's people, then if God is these things, then what can man do to us?

That's what David says. That's what David says. And it echoes very similar to Romans chapter 8, verse 31, when Paul the apostle, in light of the great saving victory of Jesus Christ, Paul the apostle would say these words, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can stand against us?

[13 : 20] That's the words of the apostle. Very, very similar here to the confidence of David, that David would look upon the greatness of God, Yahweh, as being his light and his salvation and the stronghold of his life. And he concludes very similarly, of whom shall I be afraid? David's confidence is sure. This is unimpeachable, overwhelming confidence. This is not shallow, sentimental, religious talk here.

Right? This is not the kind of thing you might overhear if you're standing nearby at a funeral. If you're standing there overhearing some of the conversations around those who are grieving, you might hear something like this. Someone putting their arm around that person and saying, it's all going to be okay. It's all going to work out. That's sentimentality. Think about it. What confidence is behind that statement? Not much. Do we really know for sure it's going to work out for the grieving widow? Do we know for sure? Can that person state with some prophetic certainty that all is going to work out for the good of this person who's grieving? Will they not endure other losses? Will they not endure hardships and troubles and trials there on out? Right? You can understand, this is kind of a shallow, well-wishing that we can hear. Or even if you go to visit a hospital, which I've done many times as a pastor, and I can overhear the conversation around the hospital bed where a person says, it's all going to work out. You're going to be okay. Well, really? I don't know. How can that person think or conclude that with 100% certainty? Like the weathermen who, I often open up my weather app on my phone and they conclude somehow it's going to be 100% sure that there's no rain today.

Weathermen rarely get it right. And they still publish the numbers, people, right? They still tell you there's no rain today, but sure enough, it rained. Or they'll tell you that there's a chance of, 100% chance of rain, and it doesn't rain a bit. So where do they get those numbers from? Well, I think the same thing with this kind of shallow, light and flighty kind of sentimentality, is that you can say with a certain measure of certainty, which is no certainty at all, right?

[15 : 39] That maybe things will go well for this person. But sentiments, think about it, religious sentiments lack power. They cannot really do anything for our future. They're not things that we can build our hope upon. We need concrete things to build on. You must have concrete rock foundations if you're going to build your convictions, your hope, your life on the certainty of what is

going to happen, the future of what might come. You need certainties. You need 100%. You need power. You need something that is thick and deep and can stand the test of this world and all of its shaking. And that's what David had. David's courage was not built on religious sentimentality. This is not light and flighty sentiment. This is David's courage. It is built on the conviction, on the confidence of the great and living God Himself.

He declares it to us in these opening verses. The Lord, Yahweh, is my light and my salvation. David's courage was built on the confidence and the greatness of the living God. And God, think about it, what more could be said than that God is a concrete confidence? On Christ, the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand. Is that not what we sing? And this is David's hope. So there's no hint of doubt in David's courage because he's fully convinced.

He knows that with 100% certainty that God is God and will always be God. From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God, says the psalmist, right? 100% certainty God will remain God. God will be the sovereign king tomorrow. God will be the sovereign king for eternity. And everything is under His mighty hand.

Nothing escapes the power and the rule and authority of Jesus Christ. Do you believe that? Do you understand that? That the Lord Jesus Christ is not religious sentimentality. He is a risen and living king who is exalted. Do we get that? Do we believe that? And if so, we can also have the same certainty and therefore the courage that David had to storm the field of battle. So David knows that this is the great and the covenant keeping God. So despite how this world might seem, despite how haphazard the headlines make us to feel, we know this, that our God is the true God and we can know His power and He will be our confidence. So let's take courage. The Lord stands at the end of enduring obedience. And this, this first point brings to front here that God stands behind David's courage. It's the person of God, the greatness of God. He is the foundation and stands behind David's courage. And this brings us to our second point, which is the treasure, which is in front of courage. So there's something behind courage.

That's the living God. Confidence in the certainty of who God is and His character. The certainty of God's works and power. But then there's something in front of courage as well. If courage is to be true courage, the courage that we need desperately as believers to step on the fields of battle day after day as we suffer and grow and try to honor our Lord under the pressures of this world, we need something behind courage and we need something in front of courage. And that is the treasure in front of courage. And we look here at verses four through six and we see the treasure, the treasure that David is after. Because there's treasure in front of courage that compels courage forward. So we know the backing. We know that we have solid foundations behind us that are pushing us onward. But then now there's this treasure that compels us, that gives us the joy to endure the hardships of battle, that gives us the desire to move forward, to press through the lines of battle with confidence. And again, I think of my grandfather, the Marine, what compelled him to step into the fields of battle? And many men, young men like him in World War II, what compels a man like that? Well, I think every soldier probably had the sense that if battles were not fought, then the enemy could wreak havoc and ravage their homes and their loved ones. There's a sense of dread. And that treasure is this. It's the face and the love they have of their loved ones back at home. They love their families. My grandfather loved my grandmother Agnes and he loved, he loved the people, his family, and he sought to fight for them. So out of love for them, out of a desire, the treasure of those he treasured the most, he willingly went to battle and endured hardships. [20 : 59] That was his treasure. And the same could be said about really any soldier. They had different reasons for fighting, but something that they loved, think about this, something that they loved was before them. It stood out before them as an X that marked a spot that they willingly took up the shovel of warfare and willingly worked hard to dig down to get to that treasure. And so in verses 4 through 6, David shows us where his X is located. Where is David's treasure? He says it. Look at verse 4.

He says this, Here it is. Do you want to know the secret of David's courage? It's that he had his treasure in the right place. He marked his X at the right spot. It was the Lord. This is it. The focus that enables courage. This is the source, David's strength of his courage in life on the battlefield, even under the threat of death. And this focus propelled him. It compelled him to step forward into hardships and into suffering. This is it. This is what we require as well, brothers and sisters.

And it's not just, by the way, it's not just for the big moments, the big battles of life. Life certainly has its big moments, right, where we have to actually storm the field of battle. We've got to plant the flag

on a particular hilltop that is overrun by enemy fire. Like those are the big moments and the glorious moments of battle. But there are so many little skirmishes that we have to endure day after daily day. These are the little skirmishes that might feel like just common, everyday, grind kind of stuff. The day awakens. We've got to get out of bed and we've got to go into that day with faith. Well, there are little skirmishes, little moments, decisions, smaller moments of life that require the same courage as the big moments. And think about this. If my courage and my endurance fail when I'm faced with the smaller moments of life, the smaller skirmishes, like for instance, a couple examples here. What if I'm faced with the temptation to put off a hard or an awkward conversation that I know I need to have?

I know I have to. Is that me? I want to make sure it's not me. Am I doing something to Mike? Okay. Do I want to use this one? Yeah, let's do that. All right. One, two, one, two. Check, one, two. All right, here we go.

[23 : 48] You know, if I have a situation where I know I need to have a conversation, you know, a friend of Christ or a brother or sister is struggling and maybe they've sinned and there needs to be one of those awkward conversations that I'd rather never have. Because you know, that conversation could go sideways quite quickly. Those are uncomfortable kind of conversations to have.

So I'm not interested in necessarily finding one of those conversations. And the temptation when I know I need to have that conversation is to know that it's awkward. I don't want to have to do that. I want to drive long way around that situation. I will go extra miles sideways to avoid that conversation. And sadly, that can be my temptation, that fear.

The fear of having to confront an awkward or difficult situation. And that's a temptation. Or maybe another moment, you know, that you'd require courage to confess sin.

Right? That takes courage for us if we have sinned against the Lord. Or maybe we've sinned against a friend. We've done something or said something or even taken something that does not belong to us.

[24 : 56] In such a situation, the temptation is to hide it. Right? To keep that in the shadow. Keep that in the closet. Nobody needs to know about this. And yet the Lord puts His finger upon our hearts. The Holy Spirit speaks.

And He tells us to go and confess our sin. Right? 1 John 1.9. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So God calls us to walk in the light as Christ is in the light. Yet the temptation, when I know I need to confess, when I know I need help from a brother in Christ, the temptation in that moment is to be afraid.

And courage fails me. And so I back off. And I begin to think to myself and justify in my own little brain, you know what? I don't need really a lot of help with this thing.

I can figure this out on my own. No one really needs to know about this. Right? And I'm sure you've been there before as well. So those are the little skirmishes I'm talking about. Two small examples. And there's a host.

[25 : 58] There's a legion of others. Of other examples that we could think together. Of these little moment by moment, day by day skirmishes we've got to go through. We've got to endure. We've got to take courage.

We've got to step onto the field of battle. We've got to take heart. And yet we could be tempted in those small moments to compromise. To walk around the problem rather than heading directly into it.

And yet the concern here is that those small moments, those life's little skirmishes are so often determinative. They determine the kind of courage, the salt of the soldier.

They determine how really, truly, how courageous and faithful you're going to be in the big moments. Because if we dream up, I can dream. It's interesting. I can dream big.

But yet the Lord calls us to dream little. He calls us to be faithful with the little. To give ourselves too much to our little things in life. And yet I can dream and scheme and think that I'll be that soldier who runs all the way to the top of the hill.

[27 : 00] And I'm going to be the one planting the flag. You know? Like the picture of Iwo Jima in World War II where the Marines were putting the American flag on the hilltop. I can imagine myself in that moment.

But yet if I have failed to show up for the little skirmishes, if I've been habitually driving sideways to avoid awkward conversations, if I have not been confessing my sins with courage, if I've not been walking faithfully and with courage for the little moments, I'm not going to show up for the big one. So God help us. God help us to step up into these moments. And what, again, is going to draw us into them? And I will tell you what is so powerful is the love of Jesus.

The love of Jesus Christ compels us, Paul tells us. And the way it compels us is, as David's showing us here, it is the draw, the magnet that pulls our hearts even into the hardships of trial and suffering, even into the moment of battle.

It draws us, whether it's a little skirmish and needing to confess his sin, or it's a big moment of life, one of those big battle moments that I need to step up and confess Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior.

[28 : 11] In both cases, the love of Jesus compels me. It is the treasure, the only treasure, the only treasure that can ennoble the kind of courage that endures anything that might break into our lives to bring discomfort or trouble.

Jesus Christ is love. That X on the spot is the only treasure. It is the only treasure that lasts. And that's the one thing that David says. He says, To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, to inquire in His temple.

Brothers and sisters, this has not changed one centimeter over the thousands of years since David wrote these words. It's the one thing that empowers the believer, that draws the believer forward. It's the joy that is set before us as brothers and sisters of Christ. This is the joy that is set before our cross that we're commanded to carry.

It is that there is treasure in God. To see His face. To see His glory. To know Him. To know His Word. To love Him.

[29 : 17] To love His Word. These are the treasures we're building our lives on. Why else are you here? Why are you here? Because you love Him and you want to know Him and you want to serve Him with all your life and with all of your heart.

You want to build your life on His truth. You want to love the Bible. And you want to share the Scriptures. That's why you're here. And God blesses that. And this is exactly what, as believers, we are doing here today.

Thousands of years later, we want to sustain one another. We want to stir one another up in courage with the love of Jesus compelling us. And we do not find true courage from any other alternative.

Like, there's so many fads out there of how people are trying to cope with this world. Listen, this world is acidic. It burns. It is destructive, the influence of this world.

Right? Whether it's seeking help through fads and mental health or through medication or it's seeking escapes, right? Through drinking or drugs or so many other things.

[30 : 22] This world will tell you this will help you. This will make this world a little bit less acidic. This will make your life easier. This will make your life happier or better. We cannot put our hope.

There's, again, the certainty. Like, you think about the numbers. If you look at the numbers of any of those categories, whether mental health or whether drugs or alcohol, if you look at the numbers of what actually helps people, they don't help people.

They don't. Ultimately, what's needed and only that's needed, ultimately and only, is the Lord Jesus Christ. His power, His grace at work, changing a life inside out.

That's where true courage is found to endure this world and its hardships. So, by God's grace, we will mark our X in the right place and we will get digging and keep digging and as we do so, with the treasure before us, we will have courage to enter the field of battle, whether the small or the big moments of life.

So, take courage. The Lord stands at the end of long and enduring obedience. This brings us to our third and final point, which we're going to take a look at, verses 7 through 14, where we see David gives us a plan for the building of courage.

[31 : 38] How do we go about building courage? How do we go about the process? What's this process look like? What does it look like to have a treasure in front of us with a confidence, a backing behind us, the foundation of the Lord Himself?

What does it look like, practically speaking? What happens in the process of building courage?

Well, this is where the psalm takes a big turn. Starting at verse 7, if you're paying attention, look at

verse 7.

It says here, Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud. Be gracious to me and answer me. If you notice, before that verse, it was third-person pronouns.

God is referred to as He. 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?

Right? So, here in verse 7, there's a turn where David no longer is talking about God, but now he's talking to God. This has become a prayer. This has become, in fact, a desperate prayer, as we'll see in these verses, as we already read.

[32 : 43] This is a desperate prayer for help. He is now turning from talking about God to begging the Lord for His help and for His mercy. It's no longer a third-person confidence, a declarations about God and His greatness, but now it's a desperate and personal call from David to the Lord in the moment of battle in his need.

So, what's going on? Why the change of tune? Because up to this point, you would have thought this was a major key march, right? Up through verse 6. You would have thought, okay, David, we're with you.

Get the banners out. Get the trumpets. Let's go. Get the boomwhackers. We'll go to town here. But then verse 7 drops, and all of a sudden, it's a new movement in this symphony that David's written, a new movement in this prayer, in this song, and this new movement is one of a minor key.

It goes dark. It goes personal, desperate. So, what's going on here? We don't know for sure, but I think we all know the dynamic, right? I think we all have been in very similar situations because right now, even in children's church, the children know the answers, right?

They probably get them all right. Someone asks, you know, should God be trusted? And all the kids, what do you think all the kids are going to say? Yes. Yes, of course.

[34 : 00] Yes, God should be trusted. And number two, should we be anxious about anything? No. Good job. You're doing just as well as the kids would do. And number three, should we be of good courage all the time?

Yes. Okay. Good job. You nailed it. So, that's the Sunday school answer, right? That's the children's church answer. This is the answer when you're sitting here in the pews and you're reflecting on these things.

But in real life, in real life, dear church, outside of Sunday school, when we're faced with real enemies, when we're faced with the real temptations, the troubles, even death itself, right there, our declarations of truth and our confidence in the Lord are tested.

This is not the testing time necessarily. We're not being tested here before God's Word on a Sunday in the Lord's Day. So, the second movement within Psalm 27 shows how we must build courage in our lives outside of Sunday school, outside of the Lord's Day, outside of these moments where we're being built up in love and encouragement together.

Number one, there's two things we're going to draw together from this text in this final point. So, to see our courage built, we have to understand, number one, if we're going to build our courage, practically speaking, number one, trials measure whether we weigh Christ's glory correctly.

[35 : 26] We've got to understand the nature of trials and troubles if we're going to get this right. Listen, I trust that you understand what an old-fashioned scale is.

Scale is one of those ancient pieces of equipment that have been around for thousands of years. They provide mankind with the ability to determine weights and measurements for commerce and for trade, but also for science, that we measure things on the scales and weigh them and see how they compare.

Listen, the Lord's scales to our courage are the trials that we have to endure. your heart is put on the scales in the middle of a trial.

That's what a trial is. It is a test. And that's the nature of our struggles, the nature of our trials, our tribulations, our problems, our sufferings, our afflictions, and what other, other words you can think of that fit those categories.

The Lord weighs the heart through the way we respond when we are under pressure. That's what afflictions are. And the scales of our hearts, what is weighed as important in our hearts, they are being tested through trials as well.

[36 : 42] Do we hold the weight of Jesus Christ and His glory properly? Are they in the rightful place? Or do we treat them lightly on the scale of our heart? Are other things heavier than Jesus Christ on the heart, the desire, the affection, the worship?

Do we worship other things more heavily than Christ? Do we treat their glory more heavily? Well, David is being tested here under the scrutiny of His gracious God.

God is scrutinizing David. He is testing David by fire, by trials that He endured here in the heat of battle. And the Lord says to David in verse 8, look with me, first part of verse 8, the Lord says to David, you have said to me, right, you have said, seek my face.

Seek my face. David is instructed by God to seek Him at all costs, no matter the cost, no excuses, no fear of missing out, no keeping options open, no, the trials surrounding David, they forced a decision, they forced a crossroad in David's life, just as God always planned it.

And that's the way it is for us. Do you realize that? It's so often when we're in trouble, when we're under trial and pressure and heat from the life we're living, whether from consequences of our own sin or folly or from no consequence of our own.

[38 : 08] Maybe someone else messed up and it's dumping on us. Whatever the situation is, even physical suffering, these pressures, when they mount up, when the problems increase, what do we think is happening to us?

What do we think when that moment hits? Well, I think based on many of the statements that we'll see in the apostles, such as in James 1, verses 2 through 4, or 1 Peter, chapter 4, verse 12, based on some of those statements you'll see in the New Testament, I think we should conclude that our unfortunate temptation is to lose all sense of God when affliction hits, when the bomb drops, when the situation gets awkward, and when we are feeling cut off and suffering.

When that comes, our temptation is to lose all sense of God. We tend to imagine that this terrible thing we're facing is just a terrible thing, that we should escape with all of our might, that we should take every resource and seek relief, that we should do so immediately and with all of our might.

Try to get out. Like being stuck in a room, a dark room, we just want to get out. This is too hard.

This is too hot. It's too heavy. But God, listen, this is what Scripture teaches from cover to cover.

God is wisely superintending our pains and our troubles. He sovereignly orchestrates them. He curates them. And then He commands to us in the midst of them that we would seek His face.

[39 : 47] He is putting us between a rock and a hard place for a purpose that we would, like David, seek His face. That's it.

That's the purpose. So if we have forgotten or if we have become complacent or if our hearts are full of complaining when we're in that situation, let us repent to God.

Let us receive fresh mercy and fresh courage to endure. That's the call. And David's response to this verse, by the way, when God said, seek my face, David's response to this and to suffering, it's very telling.

You know, think about it. He didn't come into these trials before the battle or in the battle. He didn't come to these situations and flop on the ground in despair, throwing His hands up in the air.

What else can I do? This is too hard, Lord. He starts crying for Himself, flopping it around. No, and He also didn't scramble with such striving to try to locate some sort of answer or some sort of silver bullet or some sort of relief or some sort of escape to get out of dodge.

[40 : 59] That's also not what He did. He didn't scramble and He did not flop on the ground in despair. What does He say in the second part of this verse? God says, seek my face in verse 8.

And then David says, my heart says to you, read it with me, your face, Lord, do I seek. That's very telling.

That under the gun, under the pressure and the heat of trial, David's response to God saying, seek my face is nothing but courage.

It is faith. And He says, my heart says to you, your face, Lord, do I seek. So the whole point of being afflicted is that our courage might be tested.

That our hearts would be tested and that our heart, we would pursue God. So our courage is built. Let me say this. Our courage is built as we are being tested.

[41 : 55] So I want to talk about practical things here, right? That's practical thing number one. Your faith, your courage is being tested. And as it's being tested, God is building it.

So how do we build courage? By being tested. That's the first thing. Secondly, and finally, secondly, our courage is built through long endurance because David concludes this psalm.

Look with me in verse 14. He says, wait for the Lord. Wait for the Lord. Be strong. Let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord.

The last four words of this psalm are wait for the Lord. He actually repeats himself on that point. And having courage that endures is built by waiting.

That's the second very practical thing here. How do we go about building courage to face the everyday, the pressure, the heat? Well, wait. Now, when I think of courage, I don't think of waiting. [42 : 56] I don't. I don't think of sitting around in a waiting room. That is one of the last places you want to find me, right? Doctors' waiting rooms, dentists' waiting rooms, those kind of places, or for my case, if you go to get your vehicle registration back in Pennsylvania, the DMV, that place is called, that place is basically some sort of, I don't know, but it's a holding cell.

It's punishment. You sit for hours at times. And there's nothing to read. You just sit there. They don't offer any entertainment. There's not a clown or anything to keep you busy.

It's just you sitting there waiting, waiting, waiting, and then finally your number's called and you can go up and get your vehicle. You can give them the government money so they can put the sticker on your car.

Right? That's not my idea of courage, building courage. I do not think of a waiting room. Waiting is not the place I think of for courage. I do think of acts of valor and bravery along the battle line. I think of the front line. That's where the courage is. That's where we get courage. It's when you have the weapon in your hand and the loaded gun and you're jumping on the field, right, with adrenaline pumping surging through your veins and you're taking the enemy on, head on, the front lines.

[44 : 12] Well, that's not what David's saying here. Practically speaking, our courage is built through long waiting. It's waiting for the Lord. Right? And this is where impatience of unbelief can get us into a lot of trouble.

Terrible trouble. I think there's many examples in the Bible. When we are given, we give in to the fear of failure. We give in and we stop trusting. We stop waiting. We give in to the fear and we act. We strive. We seek to escape. When the Lord says, wait, we want to go. I think of the example, 1 Samuel chapter 13 would be a great example of this, where Saul fails to wait for the prophet Samuel before the day of battle and he gives in to the pressure of his fear and he sacrifices to God unlawfully.

This is the moment that God punishes Saul, removes him from being king, that he goes forward and sacrifices to God unlawfully as he lusts for success. He lusts for success and the worst thing he fears is failure.

So in that fear, he acts. He strives. He does not wait. Think of another example, Exodus chapter 32. Aaron fails to wait. You know the story. The golden calf.

[45 : 25] Well, what brought about the golden calf? Well, Aaron and the people of God got sick of waiting. They were in the waiting room. God had them in the waiting room intentionally to stir in them courage and faith to show God's power.

Well, what did they do? They failed to wait. They got anxious. The pressure was put on Aaron to do something about it so he builds the gold calf. So he failed. He failed.

He caved into the pressure. He feared what the Israelites would think of him. He wanted to have a good reputation with the people of Israel so naturally he went along with it. So his own love of himself, his own love for his own reputation among God's people, that was greater than his love for the reputation of God and God's command.

So he went forward and built an idol. There are so many other examples of Scripture, but even in our lives, our situations, we can see this happening, right? A single person who quits waiting on the Lord but gives into the pressure of loneliness and starts a relationship with a person who's not a Christian.

That person is acting, striving instead of waiting, trusting, enduring. Or think of a person who fails to trust and wait under intense suffering but gives into the pressure, finds relief and escape through drunkenness.

[46 : 38] Why do people get drunk? Why do they get high? They're seeking escape. They don't like the life they have. They don't like the discomfort of suffering so they naturally want escape.

All of us would love that. If we had that option, we would take it. If it was righteous, we would take it. But someone gives into the pressure. They want that relief and they go about it in a sinful way and they get drunk because they're striving, they're acting when God says wait.

So waiting on the Lord can be excruciating at points and it certainly defies pragmatic concerns, right? Waiting on the Lord doesn't feel like it's working. That's the problem.

When we're waiting in the waiting room, it doesn't feel like anything's happening. And our human nature, our unbelief, wants to desperately know that God is up to something.

Lord, are you doing this? Do you have control of this? Are you going to bring about a resolution, Lord? Are you going to bring relief to me? Oh, Jesus, what are you doing?

[47 : 40] And yet the Lord calls you, he commands his people, to wait, right? Wait on the Lord, David commands twice to conclude this song and prayer.

And Jesus commands us at all costs, even if the outcome looks terrible, that we put him first, that we trust him, that we obey his word. This is so practical because so often we want to do things that are not in obedience to God's word because we just want relief.

We just want escape. We just, just, just want. And by God's grace, he commands us to take a very different path, one of courage.

And courage will be found. It will be built in the waiting room as you stay seated. I know, and in this room, I don't know many of your situations.

I don't know just how hot it is in your kitchen right now. And I mean that figuratively. I'm sure you have a hot kitchen too, especially if you're cooking some of that jerk chicken.

[48 : 47] That's good stuff. But let me say, I do not know your life and your circumstances, but the Lord who holds you has put you right where he wants you. You're right where you need to be.

Not that you have things that you should be, yeah, you probably have things you need to repent of. You're probably not doing all the things you need to be doing. But the Lord who is sovereign has you right where he wants you to get your attention.

And he commands you to wait and he commands you to trust him. That's what he's commanding this morning. And he commands that this is an everyday experience. I look, I think of Luke chapter 9 where the Lord Jesus says this.

He says, Luke chapter 9, verse 23. He says, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.

Let him take up his cross daily. And I think when we read that verse, we can often think of the great martyrs of old, right? Those who are even today who are giving up their lives, their very blood pouring out for the cause of the gospel.

[49 : 50] And that is glorious. Don't get me wrong. But again, what is Jesus saying here? Is he saying that this is just for those elite Christians who will literally die for Jesus?

Is he talking about the taking up our cross and following Jesus just to those people? Those who might make it into that old book, Fox's Book of Martyrs. It was written in the late 1500s that describes all the persecutions that were happening to the believers for the gospel.

Like, is it just that Jesus, when he said these words, that that was meant for them? No. He says to all of us, if anyone, right? If anyone would come after me.

That's you, right? Are you anyone? Yes, so am I. We are anyone. If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me. And I think it's very interesting that the Lord uses the word daily.

I think that speaks directly to what David is showing us here, that this is a long endurance. This is waiting going on. This is daily. This is not a one cross that you carry to the top of one hill, a big moment, Iwo Jima style.

[50 : 54] No, this is the little moments every single day, plodding along. Even if it's through a swamp, the Lord commands us, day by grinding day, that we long endurance, trust him, we wait on him, and we follow him, taking up his cross.

So even in the way Jesus says that, it echoes out this point, that we are commanded to wait on the Lord. We're commanded to keep going in the Lord under endurance, taking courage as the Lord leads us.

So are you a Christian? I want to speak first to those who are not possibly Christians. You're maybe confused about this. What does it mean to be a Christian? Well, it certainly means, at minimum, that you're calling on the name of the Lord.

But you need to call on the Lord by sensing your need for him. You will not call on his name as you ought if you don't see that you are sinful, that you are broken, that you require a Savior.

And only Jesus Christ can be that Savior. Would you call on his name this morning if you do not yet know him? And you know that. And this is between you and him. No one sees your heart.

[52 : 01] God does. God knows whether you are a Christian. God knows. Have you trusted in Jesus? God knows that. Are you bearing fruit for him? God knows that. Do you love him in private as well as in public at church?

God knows that. God knows who belongs to him. So if you are his, that's between you and him. But the fruit will show. You will show love and you will show courage.

You will show courage to stand up, to love the Lord Jesus Christ, even through the long endurance and the hardships that God calls us to. So, if you are not a Christian, I would call you to faith, to trust in Christ, repent of your sin, receive him, and become a Christian.

And for those who are believers in this final moment here, follow David's example. David has given us such a clear example of how we need to cry out to God for his help, for his grace, for his strength and courage.

So let your sufferings, whenever they come, however they come, let them be a springboard that pushes you off to seek the face of the Lord, to know his grace.

[53 : 09] So we would all together, those who belong to Christ, as we endure, as we take courage, we will hear these words echoing out over us. Well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter into the joy of your master. So take courage. The Lord stands at the end of enduring obedience. Let's pray. Our Lord, we're grateful for your word that comes to us like a two-edged sword.

For that sword, though it cuts so it can hurt. Lord, it is the very cut of a surgeon who cuts deep. And yes, there is blood and there can be a mess, but Lord, the surgeon is accomplishing something profound. The surgeon is accomplishing something that brings life and healing, brings change, and removes what is keeping us from joy and freedom, removes the idols, the things that are causing us to sink down lower and lower in our lives.

Oh Lord, I pray that you would bless Kingdom Life Church. I am so grateful for these people. They are your people. And they call on your name week after week and I join with them and we join with them together.

[54 : 23] Lord, we praise you, we thank you, and we ask your blessing that we would all live in courage, that we would take courage this very day to stand for our Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen.