

Seeking After One Thing

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[0 : 00] Now as the Lord enables us, let us turn back to the psalm which we have read together from the book of Psalms, Psalm 27.

And reading again verses 4 and 5. One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple, for he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble.

He will conceal me under the cover of his tent. He will lift me high upon our walk. At the beginning of the psalm we are informed that it is a psalm of David.

And it is not clear exactly from the context what time of his life or experience this psalm was produced.

Some of the psalms, they are directly pointing to a particular time and situation in his life. But this one, no.

[1 : 45] Nevertheless, he opens the psalm with words of great confidence and joy. 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? It's as if he's on a mountaintop experience with assurance of his salvation and confidence in his God.

He wasn't always like that. For example, in Psalm 61, as we read and sang together, he says that from the utmost corner of the land he will send his cry to the Lord.

And of course, if you go to Psalm 130, it isn't mentioned as a psalm of David, but the man of God there cries, From the depths, O Lord, I cry to you.

And that range of experience is true of God's people seemingly all the way down through the ages that they have mountaintop experiences and sometimes they are in the depths of the valley.

[3 : 11] But the Lord uses each of these experiences to show them things about themselves that they need to be shown and things about himself that they will profit from getting to know.

And we see this particular psalm here, Psalm 27, is one of these psalms that is so full of joy, at the very beginning at least. This man has tasted and sees that the Lord is good.

The Lord has drawn near him and the Lord has revealed himself to him in such a way that he is confident of his God and of his salvation.

Assurance of salvation is not essentially part and partial of saving faith. One can have saving faith without assurance of his personal salvation.

The theologians remind us that there is the assurance of faith which is being sure of what the Bible says and of what Christ has done being convinced of that completely.

[4 : 34] The other side of it is the assurance of sense. Is this true of me? Am I indeed part of the Church of God?

Am I indeed one for whom Jesus Christ has died? So there is the assurance of faith which is essential to salvation but the assurance of sense is something that we long to have more and more of.

and seemingly the psalmist here has a moment of that assurance of sense when he says the Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear?

The assurance of sense is something we need to ask the Lord for and use all the means that the Lord has set at our disposal to get to know more about himself and ask for the Lord's Spirit to lead and guide and enlighten us in relation to these things that the assurance of sense may be our experience also.

Well this man of God then in verses 4 and 5 he highlights three different things that I'd like to speak on for a few minutes this evening.

[5 : 56] In the beginning of verse 4 he shows that he has a singular desire one thing have I asked of the Lord and will seek to obtain there is a focus in this man's life the Lord has focused his mind focused his affections focused his soul and he says one thing I have asked of the Lord that's the first thing a singular desire secondly the second part of this verse 4 he shows a heavenly purpose and the heavenly purpose is that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple that is the main purpose of living that this man describes regarding himself and thirdly in verse 5 he expresses a sure confidence in God for he says he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble he will conceal me under the cover of his tent and he will lift me high upon a rock he has a sure confidence well these three things singular desire a heavenly purpose a sure confidence firstly this singular desire one thing

I of the Lord desired and will seek to obtain by nature we have many desires and longings and by nature our longings and our thoughts are not focused upon God at all they are focused upon the things of time and the things of sense but God has come into this man's experience in a day of his power if you read in the catechism regarding the offices of Christ as mediator he exercises the offices of prophet and priest and king and if you look at the scripture references particularly in relation to Christ's office as king it directs you to psalm 110 and verse 3 and it says there that he will come into our experience in a day of his power let's put let's quote it exactly as it is your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power in holy garments the day of

God's reviving and blessing in the experience of the soul is a day when God turns the soul away from the things of the world unto himself that's when a person is aware of one's sin of one's lostness of one's need as a sinner before God and at the same time in God's due time made aware of God's way of salvation in Christ Jesus and there is business continuing between the soul and God and this is what the psalmist is here saying one thing above everything else I have desired that the Lord has come into this man's experience and focused his mind his heart his affections in such a way that he now does business with God for his soul's salvation of course we see this in the psalms and in the experience of

God's people right throughout the Bible for example Asaph who wrote Psalm 73 at verse 25 says whom have I in the heavens high but thee O Lord alone and who in all the earth do I desire apart from you what gave Asaph to have that singular and focused desire in his life the fact that the Lord had come into his experience with saving grace and saving power life and you remember also in the New Testament when many people who had been following the Lord Jesus and listening to his teaching and some of them said this teaching is too hard we cannot listen to this and they went away and Jesus turns to the twelve and he said will you also go and Peter said Lord to whom shall we go you have the words of eternal life

Peter also had tasted and seen that God was good and the focus of Peter's life was on the Lord himself just as the focus of David's life here was on the Lord can you say here this evening that this is true concerning you the apostle Paul said one thing I do forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of Christ Jesus this is the focus of the people of God they have one thing one focus by grace oh I know that Satan will try and spoil your focus he will try and draw you away with his temptations and he lays snares for us trying to trip us up and trying to make the world attractive to us and calling to us with a voice that will resonate with our corrupt nature we still have a corrupt nature although our heart has been focused upon the

[13 : 00] Lord by God's grace nevertheless we have a remnant of corruption within us as the confession of faith so clearly teaches us a remnant of corruption and that remnant of corruption is the target for the devil's voices and the devil's drawings and the devil's temptations trying to draw us away from the focus that the spirit of God has effected in our hearts and in our lives one thing have I asked of the Lord that will I seek after but secondly and particularly we have on this second point the heavenly purpose created in this man's soul and this is the purpose explained in the middle of verse four that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life well David wasn't short of luxurious houses as king of Israel he had access to the most luxury and the most affluent situations nevertheless he says here

I want to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life what does that mean in practical terms for David in his day well the house of the Lord so far as David was concerned was the tabernacle and you remember the description given to us of the tabernacle in the wilderness and in various places where it was erected that it wasn't the most stunning of buildings actually it looked so ordinary covered with ram skins and covered in such a way that one would hardly give it a second glance outwardly but this man says I want to dwell in that house all of my days why would he want to dwell there I mean he had access to his palaces access to his various homes access to all the luxuries that human nature could desire nevertheless he says

I want to be there why what was there that drew him well he says that he wanted to gaze on the beauty of the Lord what was inside the tabernacle or around the tabernacle that would draw David as a man of God well think first of all of the priesthood the priests and the Levites fulfilling the command of God in relation to the work of the tabernacle and the work of worship around the tabernacle and think of the sacrifices that they were to give up on behalf of the people on behalf of the congregation on behalf of individuals and David would see the significance of these sacrifices as symbolizing and are types of the great sacrifice of the promised saviour you remember it's David who wrote psalm 22 psalm 22 highlights the suffering saviour psalm 69 highlights the suffering saviour and David by the spirit of

God could see the pointers to the coming Christ in the sacrifices given up in the house of God in the tabernacle and as a man whose focus was upon God and the things of God he wanted to get to the heart of things and that's why you want to get to the heart of things you want to get to know the Lord better than you know him now you want to see him clearer than you see him now you want to hear his voice louder and more effective in your heart and in your life than you hear it now and that's why you come to the word of God that's why you come to hear the word of God preached that's why you pray Lord show me yourself and then when you enter into the tabernacle there are marvellous pieces of furniture within the tabernacle that would have captivated the mind and the heart of King

David on the right hand side in the holy place there was a table with twelve loaves of bread the bread of the presence and that was replaced according to God's commandment at a regular at regular intervals and that typified Christ as the bread of life and faith in Christ Jesus who was promised in the scriptures would focus upon him as the one who was able to sustain and strengthen and feed the hungry soul and then on the other side on the left hand side of the holy place there was the candlestick and the candlestick with its seven lamps constantly burning showing that Christ is the light of the world there was no window in that part of the tabernacle apart from the light given by the candlestick neither is there any light in the life of a believer apart from the light that comes through saving knowledge of Christ

[19 : 31] Jesus he says I am the light of the world and David I fully believe would see Jesus Christ in the candlestick and the flickering flames of each of these lamps and then directly in the middle towards the holy of holies there was the altar of incense and the altar of incense was an altar upon which incense was burnt and that typified the intercession of the high priest and the priests as they made intercession on behalf of the people and of course Jesus Christ is the great intercessor that's part of his work as the great high priest of the church not only giving himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God but also he continues even in the state of glorification to exercise that office of priest as he makes intercession at the right hand of God for all of his people and David says

I want to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord to see ever more deeply into the glorious mystery of the work of salvation he wouldn't be permitted to go into the Holy of Holies because only the high priest once a year was permitted to go into the Holy of Holies but in the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies was the place where the Shekinah glory dwelt between the cherubim and upon the top of the Ark of the Covenant there was the gold plate upon which the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled the law was inside the Ark of the Covenant and typically the law spoke words of condemnation against the sin of the people but the blood sprinkled upon the top of that

Ark of the Covenant pacified the law in all its demands just as Jesus' blood satisfied the eternal and glorious justice of God but with one sacrifice he has forever made perfect those who are sanctified Jesus is and what he has done and what he promises still to do that I may gaze upon the beauty of the

Lord but then also he says he wants to inquire in his temple he wants to do business with the Lord in prayer what does he want to inquire about well he goes on throughout this psalm and he talks about some of the dangers that may lie in the way for him and if you read throughout the book of psalms and the experiences of David you find that he was a man who had to face many difficulties and dangers and trials in his life and to whom better could we have gone and to the one whose glory he glimpsed in the house of God the glory of the saviour the glory of the saviour of sinners who is able to bless not only in the day of regeneration but to continue blessing and upholding and teaching and guiding and enabling all the days of our life he wants to inquire in his temple what do you pray for when you come to the house of

God what is the main thing upon your mind when you come into the house of God here well the man of God said Lord show me your glory Moses said that he had had experience of the goodness of God on many occasions even before leaving the land of Egypt with the people of God but in the desert in the wilderness there he came to a point when he said Lord show me your glory and the Lord showed him his glory the Lord showed him what he was like what he was able to do and this is what we want also as we come to the house of God Lord show me your glory I was in a church in

[25 : 37] America once and I was given a tour around the building and man said do you want to go to the pulpit there was no congregation there it wasn't a Sunday and said yes I'll go so engraved in the lectern like this these words sir we would see Jesus that's what the Greeks said in relation to Jesus Christ when they were asked why do you come here sir we would see Jesus and the disciples brought them to Jesus and that's what we're here for to see Jesus and he has given us the means the word of God reveals Jesus to us and this is what this man is saying I want to inquire in your temple I want you to speak to me and

I want to be able to speak to you I want to be able to lay my heart bare before you you don't have to come to a building like this to do that you can do that at home in the secrecy of your life but in a corporate act of worship this and this what we do we seek the Lord's face some are seeking and not finding some haven't even begun to seek but the Lord encourages us to come ask he says and it shall be given to you seek and you shall find knock and the door shall be opened to you this man is inquiring in God's temple so that's the second thing he is busy in a spiritual way in the house of

God and thirdly we see his sure confidence in verse 5 he says 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 in the time of trouble he will hide me David anticipates times of trouble he starts on the high point the Lord my life and saving heaven but he knows there may be trouble around the corner and isn't that true with ourselves also one day of the week things seem to be fine the next day there's some kind of trouble come your way but this man says I have this confidence in the

Lord I am confident he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble I think David is going back to his days as shepherd when he uses that picture when he says he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble evidently he he he he he he he he he was a place of covering that the shepherd used to bring the weak of his flock in to shelter from the hot sun or to shelter from wild animals or danger and that's the picture I believe David has before us here he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble Isaiah uses another wonderful picture in relation to the Lord's care of his people he says he will carry the lambs in his bosom that's the same kind of picture we have here a picture of tenderness and care of the one who really stands in great need of tenderness and care in the spring time some of the lambs when they're born they need a lot of attention and some people bring them into their house and put them beside the stove and give them all the attention they can have just to make sure that they're going to survive well the

Lord sees us sometimes just like that sees us in danger and he sees us in great need but he is the great shepherd the good shepherd and he knows exactly how to help and how to intervene when we are in a day of trouble and then it says here in the secret he will conceal me under the cover of his tent he will lift me high upon a rock in the authorized version it says in the secret of his tabernacle he will hide me this was the safest part of the shepherd's tent the safest corner of the shepherd's tent and David says that's where my shepherd will take me to ensure my safety in the day of trouble isn't it wonderful that he knows our days of trouble and he knows how to deal with us to keep us safe

[31 : 46] Lord help me the guy went up when Peter was walking on the water and he started sinking when he took his eyes off the Lord Lord help me and the hand immediately came and threw him up and the Lord said why did you doubt why did you doubt so we commit ourselves to him who was able to do in us and for us exceeding abundantly above what we're able to ask or even think and then finally at the end of verse 5 he will lift me high upon a rock he will lift me high upon a rock what an amazing picture that is a picture of stability a picture of security a picture and of course I was thinking that this may point us to that version

Isaiah when the prophet says a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and as a cover from the tempest rivers of water in a dry place and a shadow of a great rock in a weary land while this man David here he is confident of the Lord's ability to protect him in the day of trouble and to give him a place to stand in the midst of life's trials and afflictions but what about the greatest of all days of trouble the day of our passing out of his life into eternity when the last enemy comes we cannot cope with him we must yield to the last enemy but

David knew that even when that valley of the shadow of death was to be his experience he was not going to need to fear because the Lord was to be with him his staff and his rod would comfort him isn't it wonderful that the Lord Jesus Christ says I will never leave you and I will never ever forsake you lo I am with you always he said to the disciples even to the end of the age well here then David is a man whose mind and heart has been savingly drawn to focus upon the Lord and he says above everything else I want one thing I want to have Christ for myself I want to be in him and

I want to live for him all the days of my life and I am going to use the access I have to the house of God that I might see the beauty of the Lord in all these sacrifices and all the procedures that went on in the tabernacle he was able to see and feed his soul upon these marvellous things that he saw and then he had the confidence and he say that the Lord will hide him in his shelter in the day of trouble and he will conceal me under the cover of his tent and he will lift me high upon a rock may God bless these thoughts to us let us pray help us O Lord to take to heart the glories of your word and may the light that is the gospel shine into our hearts more and more the psalmist said that your word is as a lamp to my feet and a light for my path and give us to see more clearly the glory of

God from the beginning of the revelation of God in the Bible in the creation right through to the end where we see the consummation of all things described in the book of Revelation for there are so many aspects of the glory of God revealed we thank you Lord that you have left your word with us and we pray that it may be a word full of life and blessing to each one of us we thank you for this time together and we pray for your blessing to be upon this congregation as they look forward in your own good time to an induction we thank you for leading them this far and we pray that you Mr MacLeod as he anticipates ministry in this part of your vineyard we thank you that you have brought them together and we pray for your rich blessing to be upon your people here make them more and more a people of prayer and we thank you that they are such and we pray that you would raise up more and more to worship and to serve you and be witnesses for you in our dark and a day in our land we thank you lord that you are able to do for us far above what we're able to ask or even think bless us now as we sing your praise and conclusion and forgive our many sins in

[37 : 58] Jesus name and for his sake amen we'll bring your worship to our close at this time singing from psalm 31 verses 21 to 24 psalm 31 in the scottish psalter at verse 21 all praise and thanks be to the lord for he hath magnified his wondrous love to me within a city fortified for from thine eyes cut off I am I in my haste had said my voice yet heard thou when to thee with cries my moan I made O love the lord all ye his saints because the lord doth guard the faithful and he plenteously proud doer doth reward be of good courage and his strength unto your heart shall send all ye whose hope and confidence doth on the

Lord depend these stanzas verses 21 to 24 of psalm 31 all praise and thanks be to the Lord all praise and thanks be to the Lord glory hath magnified his word name More Sen if I say I am a lucky The Lord has said,

My voice yet has left When to thee With Christ my Lord I am.

O love the Lord, For joy is it Because the Lord Have heard the people And the evangelist The God who ask her free Who b■ra' thee For shall stand all leaders hope and confidence doth among the Lord the end

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore Amen