

One desire

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[0 : 00] Now, as the Lord enables us, let us turn to consider words we have in the portion of Scripture we have read together. In the book of Psalms and Psalm 27, we may read verses 4 and 5.

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1. Psalm 130 begins with these words, Lord, from the depths to thee I cried. 1.

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27. 11. 12. The Lord is my light and my salvation. He is my Savior.

He has saved me from my sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has saved or delivered me from the law of sin and death. He is my light.

[4 : 43] He is my salvation. Thirdly, he says that the Lord is the strength of his life. The Lord has given him, by his grace, to stand up and be strong in faith.

We by ourselves have been floored and flattened by sin. We have no strength at all to achieve the favor of God. But in Romans chapter 5, the Apostle Paul, in a parallel thought to what David here is saying, Paul says, while we were yet without strength, what happened?

God did something wonderful for us in Christ Jesus. He who came into the world to save sinners has been the source of strength and eternal life to all who trust in him.

And this is what David is saying. He is the strength of my life. Of whom then, he says, shall I be afraid? David concedes here that enemies surround him.

And he is in danger. If you think of the scripture account of David's life, you discover that as a young lad shepherding his father's sheep, he was surrounded by danger almost all the time.

[6 : 11] A lion came his way. A bear came his way. And by the strength of his God, he was able to defeat both the lion and the bear. Then later on in his life, when he went to visit his brethren in the army, when the Philistines were threatening to overwhelm Israel, who was there but Goliath, the great Philistine?

And you remember that when David went out against the Philistine, he said something like this, You come against me with sword and spear, but I come against you in the strength of the Lord God.

He who saved me from the paw of the bear and the paw of the lion is able to deliver me from this Philistine also. And he was able to slay the Philistine with a stone and a sling.

Of whom then he says, Shall I be afraid? How do you feel coming towards the end of this particular year? Are there things that make you afraid?

Is there uncertainty in your way? Well, if you and I know the Lord of David, who says, The Lord is my light and my salvation.

[7 : 34] He is the strength of my life. Nothing that comes of the way need scare us or concern us because the Lord promises that his grace is sufficient for us and that his strength is made perfect in weakness.

But to go on particularly to the verses that I highlighted as our text, verses 4 and 5. One thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek after, and so on.

There are three points I want to make in relation to these two verses. First of all, David here expresses a singular desire. One thing I of the Lord desired.

Secondly, he highlights before us a heavenly purpose. He wants to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life to behold the beauty of the Lord and inquire in his temple.

That is a heavenly purpose that delineates and points out his life to us. What kind of life does he have?

[8 : 49] He's got a life that is heavenward in its desire. A heavenly purpose. And thirdly, finally, we have assured confidence.

You see in verse 5, In the time of trouble, he, the Lord in whom he trusts, shall hide him in his pavilion. In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me, and he shall set me up upon a rock.

That is, a sure confidence, the confidence of a saving faith. He trusts in the Lord for all that lies ahead. Whatever trouble comes, he knows that all will be well.

Firstly then, the singular desire that he expresses here. One thing, he says, have I desired of the Lord.

His thoughts, his longings, his aspirations are all sort of bound up together. Just as you might see, two or three threads twisted tightly together.

[9 : 58] That's the idea that we have here. That's the way his heart is. It is bound up in this particular way with a one, singular, united desire.

That's not the way people in the world are at all. In the book of Proverbs, you find this in chapter 17. Wisdom is before him that hath understanding, but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. Dissipated in our affections, in our thoughts, in our longings, in our aspirations, in what we want to do and be, bits here and bits there.

But the man who has been blessed by God has had his thoughts pulled in, has had his affections centered, has had his heart, as it were, dealt with in such a way that it is running in a channel that is Godward and heavenward.

That's when people truly begin to pray. It's as if the Lord has gathered all the fibers of their being and make them run in one groove towards God.

[11 : 30] Well, there's nothing wrong with seeking to advance our position in the world. If that is done legitimately, people can seek a better job.

People can seek to have a better home. People can seek to have more money, that they might use it more in the work of God and legitimately on their family situations and so on.

All these things are fine. But you see, the person whom God has blessed has one particular desire above all others, and all others are to be subservient to this great desire.

One thing have I desired of the Lord. Is that true of ourselves? Well, it was true of all of the people of God down through the ages.

See, for example, when Moses came of age and he had everything really at his disposal, he was possibly going to be ultimately the Pharaoh the king of Egypt because he was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

[12 : 50] And he had a marvelous education, he had high position in the country, he had access to money and authority and honor and so on.

But the scripture says when he came of age, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season.

See the way the Lord threw his mind, threw his heart, threw his affections, away from these things that appealed to the carnal nature and focused them upon himself.

Whatever it was going to cost Moses, he was willing to bear the cost, even suffering affliction with a people who were tyrannized, people who were enslaved and all of that.

But he saw something in the people of God that drew him to them. And what did he see? He saw that the Lord was in their midst.

[14:04] And he realized that they were a people who were in covenant with God, a people to whom the Lord had made and given promises that were sure to be fulfilled.

I will give you the land of Canaan, he said to them. Nothing shall stop you from coming to inherit the glory that I have prepared for you.

And Moses saw this, he believed that, and his heart was drawn by the Spirit of God to associate himself with these people and particularly with their God.

Whom have I in the heavens high? David says elsewhere, but thee, O Lord, alone. And in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none.

What enabled him to say that? It was the Spirit of God working mightily in his soul, throwing him away from the things of time and sense, the things that are only for a moment unto the things that are really substantial and lasting, even the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, O Lord.

[15:24] Can you say this morning that this is your singular desire? One thing I have the desire of the Lord, it is not what you are going to do tomorrow, it is not the presence you might receive later on this week, it is something far more substantial and that is God word and the blessings of the gospel.

Secondly, we see that in that singular desire there is a heavenly purpose. one thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.

And what does he say? That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. Do you remember who is saying this?

This is none other than King David. He doesn't say anything about, well, I'd like to go back to Bethlehem to my father's house and dream away my time there of my youth and enjoy my life there in a back water of a place where nobody is going to bother me.

He doesn't say, well, I'd rather stay in my own palace and this palace was furnished with all the best things. No, he says, I'd rather go to the house of God.

[16:57] If you remember the history of David, you'll realise that the house of God during David's reign was a tabernacle.

It wasn't the temple that was built in Solomon's day. And you remember from the scriptures the descriptions we have of the tabernacle, particularly the outward aspect of the tabernacle.

It was a tent. clothed with badger skins and ram skins dyed red. It was a common, ordinary looking tent of a place.

And David is here, says, there's one thing in my life. I really desire that I may dwell in that house of Lord. What was in that house of the Lord that really drew him in that way?

Well, the Bible explains to us the things that were in it and the things that were happening around it. The house of the Lord, there were the priests fulfilling their duties around the tabernacle and around the altar.

[18:19] there was an altar of burnt offering where animals were offered up in sacrifice to God. And on the inside of that tent in the holy place, there was on the right-hand side a table with bread upon it.

on the left-hand side, there was a candlestick made of gold. Right ahead of you, there was an altar of incense. And all of these things spoke volumes to David.

The bread symbolized Christ, the bread of life, I believe. The candlestick symbolized Christ, the light of life. The altar of incense, the place of intercession, where the priest offered the incense before God, ascending, as it were, in prayer unto the throne of God.

And then there was a curtain, and beyond that curtain there was the Ark of the Covenant. And inside the Ark of the Covenant, there were the two tables of stone, tablets of stone, upon which were written, with the finger of God, the Ten Commandments.

And on the top of that, a slab of gold called the mercy seat. And all these things spoke volumes to David, because the one day of the year, when the high priest went into the Holy of Holies, he would sprinkle blood upon the mercy seat, and upon the floor.

[20:02] What did that mean? The blood of the sacrifice sprinkled upon the mercy seat meant that the blood and the efficacy and the merit of the sacrifice given was sufficient to pacify God whose law demanded perfect obedience.

And David, with the eye of faith, was able to see the glory of God's way of salvation. And he says, there is one thing I want to see, and there is one place I want to go, and there are things I want to experience, and all these things are before me in the house of God.

How did my salvation come about? I'll go to the house of God and find out about it. And it's not still true with ourselves.

people come to the house of God not just to be seen by others, not just to stamp their card and say, well, I was in church every Sunday of the year.

No. People who come to the house of God for the right reasons come like David here came, that all he says might behold the beauty of the Lord.

[21 : 25] God. We were down in England fairly recently at the wedding of a cousin of ours, and on the Saturday we went for a walk and there was this large mall and beside the mall there was this little insignificant looking church.

And he said, well, we'll visit that church on Sabbath morning. And so we did. And as you may expect at this time of year, even on the Lord's Day, the mall was absolutely full of people, cars all around, people coming and going.

home, but we made our way to the church door. A young lad there and he welcomed us in. And going into that little church was like going into another world altogether.

There was quietness, there was order, there was a beauty about it all its own. And when the preacher started preaching, it was a marvellous experience to have been there to hear it, expounding the scripture with such accuracy and such conviction and power.

Their hearts were warmed. And that's what really church is all about. That the beauty of the Lord and the way of salvation through Christ can be glimpsed by us as we hear somebody reading the word of God or singing the word or preaching the word of God in particular.

[23 : 14] And this is what David was after. And he says, one thing I desire above all else, that I might behold the beauty of the Lord and behold in his temple.

The beauty of God's way of salvation in Christ. Isn't grace beautiful? Grace grace is really the blessings of eternal life not earned by us but bestowed upon us through Christ who earned them for us.

The beauty of God's eternal covenant, the beauty of God's covenant of grace, the beauty of his love, the beauty of his holiness, the beauty of his mercy, the beauty of his power.

When you think of the fact that Jesus Christ lay in the tomb and on the morning of the third day, he was triumphant. What power that must have been.

And isn't that a beautiful thought and something to admire, that Christ who was dead is now alive and he is alive forever more. And those who believe in him savingly will never see eternal death but will rise at last, bearing his image.

[24 : 39] John says, we know not yet what we shall be, but we know that when we see him, we shall be like him and we shall see him as he is. David said, I want to inquire in the Lord's house.

I want to seek these things out, understand them better, lay them up in my heart, mull over them, chew them over us where in my mind, get the juice out of them, that my soul might be sustained and strengthened and that I become more and more strong in the faith, giving glory to God.

Thirdly, we see David's sure confidence. In verse 5, in the time of trouble, he says, the Lord shall hide me in his pavilion.

In the secret of his tabernacle, he shall hide me, he shall set me up upon a rock. He anticipates more trouble. It's as if he has reached some kind of a plateau in his experience, and he is saying, well, the Lord is my light and my salvation.

He has brought me thus hard and I rejoice in his goodness. But the life of the Christian isn't a straight line on a plateau with no problems.

[26 : 09] David anticipates going down into the valley again. There are troubles on each side. There may be giants waiting in the way. There are temptations in your own way.

The devil will try and break in upon your peace in one way or another. David says, in the time of trouble, he shall hide me.

Just like the shepherd in Israel, when there was trouble or danger to the flock, he would take the little lambs who were weaker than the rest and hide them, it says, in his pavilion.

a place beside himself, maybe under the flap of the tent, where there was extra security. David says, the Lord will do that for me.

Without his protecting hand around me, I will be open to all and sundry, but with his protecting arm around me I shall be saved.

[27 : 21] he shall hide me in his pavilion, and in the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me. There was an even more secure place by the shepherd in his tent.

In extreme circumstances when the flock was under great threat, he would find a place nearer himself. And so it is with his people.

he draws them close to himself in times of trouble. Maybe the trouble with you this morning is trouble in your family, or trouble in relation to your work.

There are so many people unemployed. Maybe it is trouble in relation to your health. Maybe it is somebody that is causing you trouble and you don't know why.

Of course, the greatest of all troubles awaits us all. And that is when we descend into the valley of the shadow of death.

[28 : 34] Death is the greatest of our difficulties and darkneses in the world. And David wasn't unmindful of this.

death. But in the time of trouble he doesn't specify which time may be death itself. He says he shall hide me in his pavilion. He says in Psalm 23, when I go through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil because thou art with me.

Thy rod and my staff he comfort me. he will hide us, send us words of comfort and assurance to give us to be strong in the face of all the difficulties and trials that might come.

Oh, sometimes when people are ill, suffering on their sick bed, no word comes from the Lord. Well, that is a great trial and a complication.

But the Lord will come in his own time. Job was going forward and he couldn't find him, backwards and around him and he couldn't see him.

[29 : 56] But then he came to the point where he says, I know that my Redeemer lives. The Lord will come in his own due time. It will not be a moment late to come with his word of encouragement and with his grace to strengthen us.

In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion. In the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me and he shall set me up upon a rock.

Upon a high rock above the plain, a place of safety, a place that can't be assailed by the enemy. upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Who are you this day with David and what he was saying? Do you have David's sure confidence? Whatever comes, that you know the Lord is able by his grace and by his spirit to give you strength and wisdom for the needs that you have.

What else? What about the heavenly purpose that David had? That he was so keen on coming to the house of God and dwelling there and inquiring there that he might behold the beauty of the Lord and admire God's way of salvation.

[31 : 30] have you got that desire in your heart this day? And what about the singleness of purpose that David had?

That the people of God always have when they have turned their back upon the world and seek him until they find him.

Or may that be true of which one of us let us have this singular desire, this heavenly purpose, and by God's grace this true confidence for the future.

Let us pray. Lord our God, help us to be thankful this day for thine own holy word that speaks to us so personally and so powerfully.

and we pray that each one of us here this morning might be able to follow David in his desire and longing and we pray for thy blessing to be upon us for the rest of this day as we come to worship thee in the evening if that is thy purpose for us.

[32 : 52] May we do so with the fear of God in our hearts and a real longing and desire after thyself. Go before us then we pray and cleanse our every sin for Jesus sake.

Amen.