

The Battle Between Faith And Fear | Psalm 27

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[0 : 00] Well, I want to invite you to go with me this evening to Psalm 27. Psalm 27. We're recording here from Santiago, Chile, from our house.

Actually, there is a complete shutdown right now, military-controlled quarantine. And so that gives us a little bit of limited options on where to record from and how to do things.

But this psalm, I think, is going to be very helpful for us this evening because it really talks about that place where we're battling between having faith in God or having fear.

That point where we have confidence and we're ready to charge forward and we're trusting the Lord and we know that He is going to answer our prayers. And then the next minute we're living in fear and we're wondering whether or not things will work out well and whether things will end well and all these doubts and fears come to our minds.

And no doubt during these times we're having a lot of these kinds of battles in our own heart where for one moment, by faith, we're confident in the Lord and then the next moment we're doubting, looking at the circumstances and wondering what is really going on.

[1 : 07] And I think the psalmist who was going through that same mindset can help teach us in principles this evening. So in the first part of Psalm 27, we see the psalmist, David, very confident.

In the second part, we see him a bit more fearful and seeking the Lord there and showing some doubt as he opens up his own heart. So let's jump into it and see some things that we can learn today as we realize that faith and fear are fighting for dominance in our soul.

I almost spoke in Spanish there. So if a little Spanish comes out, enough of you all speak Spanish, so it'll all work out. Psalm 27, verse number one. Here the psalmist is talking about, in that present tense moment now, the Lord is my light.

The Lord is my salvation. And because of that, who can I fear? If the Lord is for us, who can be against us, right? The Lord is the strength of my life. Right now, today, he is my strength.

If you have time, go through this psalm and just notice all the pronouns. Notice all the personal pronouns where he talks about my Lord and he's my salvation. He's my life.

[2 : 42] And when I think about all of who my Lord is against my foes, you know, there's no comparing the two. Our Lord is way more stronger and trustworthy and we can have confidence as we stand before him.

So the first principle that we see from this passage is that at times we stand in confidence. In times, at times we stand in confident faith, faith in our God.

We have that confident faith because of what God is doing. The psalmist there talks about how God is being who he is. He's doing what he does. And because of that, we have no fear.

Verse number one, talking of that present tense. But not only do we think about who God is, but we can also reflect on what God has done. How can we stand today with confident faith in God?

Well, let's just take a few moments and remember what the Lord has done. What has God done in your own life, in your own family, in the last month? What about the last year? What about the last 10 years?

[3 : 42] No doubt if we had all day and all night and all week, we could all sit around and share the wondrous things that God has done. You know, here we are in Chile and even though we're in a time of quarantine, a time when we can't really leave our house except with a government permission and then we can only go to the grocery store a couple of times a week.

Times like this where it seems that the bottleneck on ministry has really squeezed in tight. We're seeing people saved. And even today, I was getting a report from one of our churches about how God is using this time to reach new families.

Another church was telling me about how about 50 people have been reached and relationships are being developed with people that we probably would have never met had it not been for this whole virus that has come in and the lockdown that has caused.

People's hearts are open. They're sensitive and the Lord is working. We can be thankful for what God has done in the past and what the Lord is doing currently. Verse number two, look what it says as he looks back in the past.

It says, when the wicked, even my enemies and my foes came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. They came, past tense, they came upon me, but they stumbled and they fell because you are my God and you are with me.

[4 : 59] Let's stand today in confident faith, knowing what God is doing, knowing who God is, knowing what God has done. But as we look toward the future, and I know there can be a lot of doubts and a lot of fears, and even for our church in recent times with our pastor in the middle of a fight there for his help and so many other loved ones and friends of ours that are going through similar types of circumstances, it can be a time when naturally on the human side we are very concerned and our hearts can quickly fear with fear and worry.

But let's remember as we think about the future, who our God is. Look what the psalmist says here. He says in verse number three, Though an host should encamp against me. Talking about this army, enemy army that comes in to besiege the city, to cut the city off where they can't come in and they can't go out, which is a tactic they used back in those days to starve a city and to conquer that city in that slow way.

Well, it says, Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Although the circumstances seem hopeless, my heart, that emotional level part of me, my mind, my emotions will not fear.

Look what it says. Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. That confident faith. Here we see the psalmist, David, and he's writing and he's praising the Lord.

He's excited in who God is, what God has done, is doing, will do, who God is. And I want to remind you today that we can have confident faith because we have a good God, and we have a mighty God, and we have a powerful God.

[6 : 43] And as Daniel said when he was thinking about, or there in the book of Daniel, when they were thinking about the fiery furnace, the three Hebrew children that were going that direction. Well, God, you know, we might die here, we might not, but no matter what, we're going to glorify God.

We don't know what the future holds for us, but no matter what, we're going to move forward, glorify God, and do what is right. Here in the passage, as we move on to verse number four, the Bible says in Psalm 27, 4, You know, our confidence, that confident faith that we have, the confidence in God, it grows as we're in the presence of the Lord in his house.

As we're in the presence of the Lord in his house. Here the psalmist talks about that one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after. He wants to be, he wants to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

You know, oftentimes we talk about bucket list. What's that one thing that you want to do? What are those ten top things that you want to do? Well, here David, here the one that had been anointed to be king.

He says, my heart's desire, I just want to be there in the temple. I just want to be there in the tabernacle. I want to be there in the presence of the Lord. It's almost as if he had envy for the role of the priests that were there working in the tabernacle and being a part of all the sacrifices.

[8 : 16] And they're there with the Lord's presence and close there to that holiest place. And David's looking and he's talking about how he just wants to be close to the presence of God.

That is where our confident faith grows. And this might be a time when you and I need to take more time to read God's word, to pray, to spend time meditating on the scripture, meditating on the promises that we have in God's word, trusting in the Lord, getting to know him more.

You know, there are times when we have nothing left to hang on to but God. And in those times, we get to know him in a more intimate way. And I pray that God will use this time at Vision Baptist Church and through all of us that are missionaries through Vision Baptist Church, that God will grow our faith in him as we draw closer to him and walk closer with him.

I know many of us have been praying, praying more than the typical amount. Some have been fasting and asking the Lord to work in our pastor's body and others that are sick and it's been a heavy burden on our hearts.

And the circumstances have brought us closer to the Lord and have made us depend on the Lord in a greater way. And here David is talking about how when he draws close to the Lord and he's there at the temple, look what it says.

[9 : 38] He wants to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. To behold the beauty of the Lord. You know, we lose sight of all else when we get a view of the beauty of the Lord.

It reminds me of Isaiah 6 where Isaiah was looking there at that grand scene of God sitting on the throne and everything else just melted away as he was standing there and he asked God to forgive him and to cleanse his lips and his tongue and he gave his life there to the Lord in worship.

And you know, as we draw close to the Lord and we view who he is and the beauty that is found in our Lord, all the other circumstances, all the other problems just start melting away and we realize that whatever might happen here in this world, our God is good.

He's given us great promises and despite the problems, we know that he's going to prepare a place for us and he's going to come back and get us. And even if we meet death, this side of his return, we will close our eyes on this side and open our eyes there in heaven to be with him for all of eternity.

What a wonderful promise that we have. We don't sorrow in times of sickness and death like the unbelievers. We might sorrow in a human sense, but we have great faith knowing that being with the Lord is even better than being here in this earth.

[11 : 04] The worst threat that the virus can have for us is the opening gate to be with our Savior. And those things should comfort us and that should encourage us as we remember who God is, what he's done, what he's doing, and we draw close to him and we behold his beauty.

It reminds me of John 15, 5, where Jesus says, I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, abiding in Jesus, dwelling in the temple as we draw closer to him.

That whole first part of John 15 that talks about abiding in Christ. It says there, He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me, ye can do nothing.

No doubt times of trials or times of pruning, of times when we examine our hearts and we abandon some things and we focus on what is most important.

Focusing on Jesus, focusing on his work, focusing on our family and relationships that are important, focusing on reaching the lost with the gospel. And I pray that God would help refocus my heart through these times and that he would do the same in your heart as you're studying this psalm with us this evening.

[12 : 15] Psalm 27, 5, the Bible says, For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion or in his refuge. In the time of trouble. How many of you would say, I feel like I'm in a time of trouble tonight?

I feel like the truth is I need a place to hide. I want a secure spot, a place where I can go and I can know that everything is all right. But the Bible says here, For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me.

He hides me. I draw close to him there at the temple. I draw close to him in that relationship. And we know that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, that he dwells in us.

What wonderful truths we have, the benefits we have, this side of the resurrection that those on the other side didn't have. What a great hope that is for us tonight.

But it says here that, He shall hide me in his pavilion. In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me. He shall set me upon a rock. It reminds me in the Old Testament of the cities of refuge.

[13 : 12] If you had a problem, if people were trying to put you under some kind of penalty, you could run to the city of refuge. And getting there, you had security for a time.

And we run to Jesus and we have security. That refuge, but also the rock. We go to him and there's shelter. It's strength. And there's a firm foundation when we're in Jesus.

He is our rock. There was a man with the last name of Top Lady who was seeking refuge from a violent storm and a cleft of a rock. Later he wrote one of the greatest hymns of the Christian church.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in thee. And it reminds me of this passage here where we hide ourselves in the Lord. Actually, he hides us in him.

And we have protection. Run to Jesus tonight if you need a place of security. Run to him. Give your life to him. Draw closer to him. If you've never placed your faith in Christ alone, there are people tonight who would be more than happy to take the Bible.

[14 : 14] And you can write us. You can send a text message. You can call the church. You can send an email. And somebody will call you, will contact you, and take God's word and show you how you can know for sure that if you were to die today that you would go to heaven.

They can show you how you can know that Jesus is your refuge, that he is your rock. And I encourage you not to wait any longer. Psalm 27, 6, the Bible says, And now shall my head be lifted up.

Above mine enemies, round about me. Therefore will I offer in his tabernacles sacrifices of joy. I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

There are the psalmist with his head raised high. Above his enemies in defeat, he's singing to the Lord. He's offering sacrifices of joy. He is living in confident faith.

But look how quickly things change as we get into verse number 7. Because not only do we see the first principle from this text, that at times we stand in confident faith, the second one that we see is, at times we hide in private fear.

[15 : 21] At times we hide in private fear. Verse number 7 of this text, the Bible says, Oh Lord, when I cry with my voice, have mercy also upon me and answer me.

He says there, when I cry, when I shout, Lord, please, when I shout, will you please answer me? He's bringing up doubt there about the Lord and Lord, please have mercy on me.

Please answer me whenever I need you. Now how did he go from verse 7, or verse 6 to verse 7? In verse 6, he's all confident. In verse 7, he's almost, if you notice, it changes there from third person where he's talking about the Lord, verse 1 through 6, and all that the Lord is to him.

And he switches over and he's like, all right, now I want to talk to you, Lord. I've been discussing you as a third person, but now it's just me and you. And I want to make sure that you hear me.

I want to make sure that you answer me. I want you to have mercy on me whenever I call unto you. Look at verse number 8. When thou sayest, seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek.

[16 : 27] He's saying, Lord, now when you've told me to look for you and look unto you and to seek after you, that's what I've done. My heart has tried to do that. Verse 9, hide not thy face far from me.

Put not thy servant away in anger. Thou hast been my help. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. Just a few verses before, he was talking about the Lord being his light and salvation and everything.

And now he's saying, Lord, please don't forsake me and don't leave me. And when I call you, sometimes it feels like you're not there and you're not answering and I don't know what's going on and I'm trusting you because I know who you are.

But then a few minutes later, I find myself doubting and I'm not really sure how to move forward or what's going to happen. And I want to trust you, but then I find myself not being sure if I could or if I should trust you.

But Lord, please don't leave me alone. Be there for me. In verse number 10, he goes on to say, let's pick back up in verse number 9, hide not thy face far from me.

[17 : 35] Put not thy servant away in anger. Thou hast been my help. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

And he kind of swings back a little bit toward confidence in the Lord saying, my parents might not, they might forsake me, they might not be with me, but in that time, I'm trusting that you're going to pick me up, that you're going to be there for me.

That when all others leave me, when all others turn their back on me and there seems to be no hope whatsoever, I'm going to trust that I can turn to you. Here he is, there's faith and fear fighting to have control over his heart.

And if you're like me, over the last week especially, there's been so many times when faith and fear have been at war. And there's some hours where the faith is standing strong and there's other hours where the fear is, it's rising up pretty strong.

And then I remember who the Lord is and who I am in him and the faith kind of comes back. But the next door neighbor of faith is fear. And we can move from one to the other ever so quickly.

[18 : 41] And I want to be reminded this evening as we go through this psalm that at times we hide in this private fear. In this point of private fear, the psalmist goes on to pray directly there to God as he's talking to him and asking him not to abandon him or leave him or turn away from him.

In verse number 12, or verse number 11, he says, teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies. Lord, I'm going to ask you something and what I'm asking you is to lead me in a plain path.

And tonight, a good prayer if you're in that point of fear is to say, Lord, I need you to lead me. You know, sometimes life is like being in a car and you have the headlights at night and you can see whatever, 30, 40 yards ahead of you, but you can't see what comes further away.

And we go by faith as the Lord shows us a certain amount in our own future. And we don't know what's going to happen in two days or 10 days or two months, but we can trust the Lord right here where we're at right now.

We're asking him to lead our path. David did not pray for an easy path. Notice, he simply prayed that God would show him what steps to take in the difficult circumstances which surrounded him.

[20 : 00] And tonight, we need to pray the same and ask God to give us wisdom. Give us wisdom in our families, wisdom in our church, give us wisdom and the things that we think, the things that we say, the things that we do, that the Lord would guide our steps in all that we do.

And in times of trials and difficulties, we need the Lord's help. Verse number 12, he goes on to say, deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies, for false witnesses are risen up against me and such as breathe out cruelty.

He's asking God for deliverance, for salvation, for help from that moment of crisis. And you know that's what we're doing now. We're asking the Lord, Lord, please deliver us from this particular circumstance.

Some of you, in addition to the health crisis, you're having financial difficulties and facing unknown circumstances in the future. And we pray out in that moment of private fear and we say, Lord, lead my path and Lord, deliver me from that fear.

Deliver me from these circumstances. Show me what to do and help me to keep moving on strong and faithful. What we see as we go through this passage, there's times where we stand in confident faith.

[21 : 12] There are times when we hide in private fear. But then there's times when we come back to that confident faith. Third principle there. Then we come back to confident faith. Verse number 13, look what it says.

I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. In other words, he's saying here, I would have fainted.

I was, I was, I would have been in that state of losing all hope and losing all strength and just collapsing there. That's what would have happened unless I would have believed.

If I had not remembered, if I would not have remembered to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. What an interesting phrase, the land of the living. He's not talking about the land of the dead or the land of those who have moved on into eternity.

He's talking about right now, right here on earth, we see the goodness of the Lord. And you know, under circumstances and some of the circumstances that many of our loved ones have been living under, it can become heavy, the burden.

[22 : 16] And sometimes we can feel that there's not that physical strength or emotional strength or even spiritual strength to continue moving forward. But then we stop and we remember the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

It might do us good tonight whenever the service is over and the Zoom call is over and everything's done and we're getting ready to go to bed and maybe as a family or maybe just laying there on our own to take a few moments and thank the Lord and remember all of His blessings.

And as we count His blessings one by one and we see all that God has done and how good God is, the amount of blessings that we have are truly uncountable because God has been good to us, hasn't He?

God's been good to you and to your family. And despite certain difficult circumstances, we can still see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. And because of that, instead of fainting, we stand back up with confidence and we move forward with confidence in God and having that confident faith as we put our eyes on Him.

The Bible says there in verse number 14, wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord. Be of good courage and He shall strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord.

[23 : 31] You know, we have a timetable and we have expectations and we have desires, but God, His time is always perfect. Reminds me of Lazarus and his sisters and they were doubting, Lord, if you just would have showed up a little bit earlier.

But God, God has a plan and tonight, we want to wait on Him and trust in Him. We know He hasn't abandoned us. We know that He continues to be present tense.

He is our strength. He is our light. The light in the darkness to show us the way. Fear comes at night in darkness, but the light, He is our light.

He is our salvation. He is our strength. We wait on the Lord. We be of good courage. That reminds me of Joshua 1.8 about being of good courage and strengthening our heart.

It says there, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart. Who's going to give us tonight the strength to keep moving forward? It's our good, loving Savior. And I want to remind you this evening that the fear and the faith, yeah, they're battling in our hearts.

[24 : 36] And that's something that happens all through this life, right? And as we look at the circumstances, as Peter, as he looked at the waves and he was walking on the water there, he began to sink. As we look at the circumstances, we can start fainting.

We can become very fearful. We can start even questioning God and questioning His goodness, but we take a moment and we draw close to Him and we dwell together with Him and we meditate on His Scripture and we pray to Him and we cast our cares on Him and we can stand up again with confidence in our God, that confident faith, trusting in our Lord.

What are the applications that we can have in this time of suffering? Let's remember what God has done. Let's remember what God is doing. Let's remember what God is going to do. Let's remember who God is.

He is our light, so we need not fear because of darkness. He is our strength, so we need not fear because of our weakness. He is our salvation, so the victory is sure.

He is our strength, so he is our strength, so we need to be larvae.