

Our Light and our Salvation

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[0 : 00] So, we're going to be looking at Psalm 27 this evening. So it should appear on the screen, but I'm going to read from my Bible.

! So if you want to read along with me, please feel free. 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 evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall.

Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear. Though war break out against me, even then will I be confident. One thing I ask of the Lord.

This is what I seek. 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 seek him in his temple.

[1 : 06] For in the day of trouble, he will keep me safe in his dwelling. He will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle. And set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me.

At his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy. I will sing and make music to the Lord. Hear my voice when I call, O Lord.

Be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, seek his face. Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger. You have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God, my saviour. Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

Teach me your way, O Lord. Lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not hand me over to the desire of my foes. For false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.

[2 : 14] I am still confident of this. I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord. Be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Amen. This is one of those psalms where there's just loads and loads of things we could pick out of it.

But this is, as I was praying about this evening, this is the psalm that came to me. So I'm not going to, by any means, going to pull out everything that's in it. I would encourage you to read it at home when you have time and just reflect on it.

Because it's such a comfort and such an encouraging psalm. And it reminds us of so many truths about God. So I'm going to pull out a few things and maybe there will be something that will resonate with you.

And if it does, just make a mental note or write it down. Put it on your phone, whatever. Take it home and spend some time reflecting on it this week. So I was intrigued as I was reading it again through just now.

[3 : 20] Because Andy, if you're here this morning, Andy told the story of when we were on holiday and he burnt his finger. And his phone recognizes it. But he talked about God not rejecting us. And that's one of the things in this psalm is that we can rely on God not to reject us.

So I wanted to look about what this psalm tells us about God. First of all, it reminds us that he is our light. Starts off, the Lord is my light and my salvation.

He is the one who helps us to see clearly. He gives us understanding. He gives us wisdom. James talks about if anyone lacks wisdom, you should pray to God.

And God generously grants us wisdom. He gives us light for our path. He shows us the way ahead. Sometimes he might not show us as far ahead as we'd like to see.

But he always will show us the next step. Secondly, he rescues us. In verse 4, David's talking about God be my light and my salvation.

[4 : 23] But also about being saved from his enemies. Now for David, they were very real physical enemies. In the sense of people trying to kill him, chase after him, do bad things to him.

Our enemies might not be of that form, but there might be other things in our life that get in our way of following God. And we need to recognize that God is the one who rescues us from those.

Leslie shared in her testimony about God rescuing her when she was in some really difficult places. So God is the one who rescues us. He offers salvation and keeps us safe.

So going on to that point, the next point, keeps us safe. There's a great verse in Proverbs 18.10 that talks about the name of the Lord being a strong tower. And the righteous run to it and they are safe or saved.

I think it says in some versions. But we can trust in God to protect us and give us security. And again, sorry, I don't want to embarrass you, Leslie, but I love the way about you suddenly felt that sense of peace when you were in a really difficult place because God was protecting you and God was with you.

[5 : 25] And lots of us can give testimony to that. But it's good just to be reminded that he is the one who keeps us safe. God is merciful. Isn't that amazing?

He is merciful to us. Psalm 103. He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve. But he is merciful. He promises to forgive us and to restore us.

Lamentations talks about his mercies being new every morning. We may feel that we've made a mess of things. We screwed it up again. We don't know how to get through a situation. But God is merciful and he delights to be merciful to us.

And also God is faithful. David is crying out to God here because he's seen what God has done in his life previously. He recognizes God's faithfulness to him and that God is the one who can rescue him, can protect him, keep him safe.

But he recognizes that God is constant. That even though around him might be chaos, God is constant. And that's a good thing for us to hold on to, that God is constant.

[6 : 33] God is faithful in the midst of our lives, which may feel in turmoil at times. And I know there's issues that we're going to be praying about in a little while where it feels like everything's really difficult.

But we can remember that God is faithful and trust in that. So those are just a few things to pull out about God's character from this psalm. But I just want to think a little bit about what our response should be to that.

And these are some suggestions from this psalm, but God might prompt you in another way. So please be open to what he's saying. There's a fabulous verse in verse 4.

I don't know whether it's right to have favorite Bible verses or not, but this is my favorite verse in the whole of the Bible. Because it just reminds us to put God first, to focus on him.

And when I read that verse, I feel my spirit sort of slowing down. And it's like when you flop in an armchair at the end of a hard day. Maybe you've got a cup of cocoa or something. It's just like, oh. But I can rest in God's presence.

[7 : 33] So David is saying, make him first in our attention. Slow down. Take time to focus on him. Let's learn to center ourselves in God's presence.

Not just when we're in church or at our life groups or spending time with Christian friends. But when we go out to work, when we go to Sainsbury's, whatever. Let's keep that idea that we are centered in God and we can focus on him.

We can give him our attention as we're going about our daily lives. Honour him. Let's develop a habit of praise. And I don't know about you, but sometimes I feel like I'm in a really good habit of praising and thanking God regularly.

And sometimes I sort of find my attention drifting. That's okay. God knows what we're like. But let's keep bringing our attention back to him. Let's praise him and honour him. Verse 6 talks about, At his tabernacle, I'll sacrifice with shouts of joy.

I'll sing and make music to the Lord. It's an exuberant sense of praise. It's a real recognition that God is good and that he has helped me and rescued me. So let's keep choosing to honour him.

[8 : 42] To confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord. Let's seek to follow in his ways. David says, teach me your ways.

So let's be open to the prompting of the Spirit. Let's seek, as it says in our vision statement, let's seek to be with Jesus.

To become like Jesus and to do what Jesus did. We also need to trust him. Even when life is tough, we need to keep coming back to the fact that we can trust in him.

We can be confident in him. We can choose to depend on his faithfulness and love rather than being distracted by things around us. And often that's something that we need to come back to, you know, as we go through new situations and think, oh, this is a bit tough.

Not sure I like this. Keep making that decision to trust in God. To acknowledge that he is faithful. To believe that he is faithful. And then it talks quite a lot in this psalm and elsewhere in the Bible about do not be afraid.

[9 : 52] Or David says, you know, of whom shall I be afraid? I will not fear. Anyone else never fear? No. No. We all feel afraid at times.

It's easy to say but not so easy to do. And I don't think actually the psalmist and others are saying, you should never experience fear. Sometimes fear is a very rational response.

So Andy talked about a holiday. We went to Madeira. And in Madeira, there is a cliff, which I think is the second highest sea cliff in the world or something. It's the highest in Europe anyway. It's about 580 metres above sea level.

And you can walk on a glass platform that sort of projects over the top of this cliff. Now, I didn't find it too bad, actually, because the glass was sort of frosted in places.

So it felt clear that I was walking on glass. I've been on other glass floors where it just looks completely clear. And it's like, ooh, this feels a bit weird. But had I been standing on the edge of that cliff and no sort of protection around me, feeling a bit frightened would have been a very logical and sensible response because it would be an indication that I need to come away from the edge and make sure I'm in a place of safety.

[11 : 05] So I think when it talks in Scripture about do not be afraid, it's more about don't live in fear. Don't allow that fear to dictate the way that you live your life. Recognise that fear shouldn't be in control.

It's God who's in control. We can turn to him for help and protection. And by focusing on who he is and what he's done, that can bring us to a place of peace, even in the midst of a storm or even in a place of fear.

So when we sense that fear welling up inside ourselves, it's okay to say I'm afraid, but our instinct then should be to turn to our Heavenly Father and seek his protection.

So in finishing, I'd just like to encourage you. Sorry, can you put the last slide up? Thanks, Josh.

Just to think about the aspects of God's character that we've mentioned this evening or something else that jumped out from the psalm or even something else that God's been saying today or one of the responses that's been suggested and take time to focus on it this week.

Maybe pick a verse out and think, well, I'm just going to pray through that verse. I'm going to spend some time sitting with it and seeing what God is saying to me in that and allow him to speak to you through the truth of his word.

[12 : 23] Amen. Let's just pray briefly before I hand over to John. Father, thank you for the many truths contained in that psalm.

Thank you for the reminder that we can focus on you, we can trust you, that you are faithful, that you protect us and you keep us safe. Father, I pray that that word would embed itself in our hearts this week, that you would remind us of who you are and that we can turn to you, whatever our situation.

Father, I pray that you would continue to speak to us this week by your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.