

LIGHTWAIT

PSALM 27 DECEMBER 16, 2015

Find your way to Psalm 27 this evening.

You may have seen a trailer for a new movie that is out right now titled *The 33*. It tells the story of the Chilean miners who were trapped 2,000 feet under the earth for 69 days in 2010. The promotions for the film are promising to highlight the Christian faith of some of the miners. Jose Henriquez, who many in the group described as the pastor throughout the ordeal, said this after being rescued: "We realized we had only one alternative, and that was God himself." They would meet twice daily for prayer. The prayer meetings soon evolved into Bible studies, with Henriquez preaching from memory and the men singing worship songs together.¹ At one point he wrote in a letter from inside the mine that was passed up to the surface: "I am fine because Christ lives in me."²

Our Christian faith illuminates and invigorates. Author and poet Margaret Sangster once wrote: "*Faith can place a candle in the darkest night.*"

That sentiment is the launch pad of one of King David's most beautiful Psalms - Psalm 27. Though he was in a time of immense strain in his life, he pours out a song of confident satisfaction. Though he finds himself in darkness, he can see God on display. Though he seems buried in crisis, his faith produces contentment.

We aren't sure what the specific historical context of this Psalm is, but it's clear that, whenever it was, David was in danger. At the writing of this Psalm he was susceptible to enemies, he was separated from the tabernacle and it seems he even had a strain on his family relationships.

From all of this comes a beautiful song, showing a living faith of potency and resolve. It shows us a man who not only has an intellectual or theoretical devotion to the Lord, but a *vigorous* faith that makes a difference in the dark nights of life.

David here encourages us by declaring the great acts of God and he examples to us how to have our faith at the helm and be anchored in the Lord.

David starts in verses 1 through 6 as he **recounts** the acts of God. Beginning in verse 1 we read:

Psalm 27.1 - *'The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?*

We don't need to know the exact circumstances to recognize that David is in trouble in this Psalm. He's on the run. He feels weak and in the dark. Unlike the Chilean miners who were *accidentally* trapped in their cave, David was a guy who often had to flee *INTO* caves to survive. But, in a moment of quiet and rest, no doubt keeping a watchful eye out for attackers, he paused and considered his life and his God and when he did that he could immediately find comfort because he knew that God is a light and God is a deliverer and God is strength to His people.

¹ <http://www.christianpost.com/news/48749/#GJxdxYWJwuP0hVq5.99>

² <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2010/10/14/the-story-behind-the-chilean-miners-jesus-t-shirts/>

Because of God's presence, he could see where he was going and he knew what his destination would be. He was headed toward the Lord. He was headed toward salvation. God would illuminate his steps and be his shield.

Whether we're in the light of day or the dark of night, when we stop to consider the reality of God and the reality of His work, it should give us immediate perspective in every situation.

David had that perspective. He understood the strength and salvation of a relationship with God, which is why he said the Lord **IS** my light and salvation. Not 'could be' or, 'I wish He was', but **IS**. And that consideration drove the fear out of his heart.

You know, right now in the Christian culture there's a lot of talk about 'brokenness'. It's kind of a buzzword you'll hear in music and books and sermons. And I understand the idea of where that's coming from, but to me it seems that there's almost a celebration of 'brokenness' and a desire to stay that way. As if that makes us more genuine or more meaningful. But when we read the Bible that's not what we see. We see a verse like this where the people of God are not glorying in brokenness, but they glory in the God who *heals* the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. We glory in the God who brings beauty *out* of the ashes, He doesn't just leave them in a shattered heap.

The Lord's plan is to fill us with so much strength that fear is removed. This kind of strength:

Psalm 27.2-3 - ²When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell. ³Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war may rise against me, in this I *will be* confident.

David first remembered back to what God had already done and that gave him a confident hope for what God would do in the future.

God is very consistent. He's not always predictable, but He's consistent. He changes not. His character doesn't change. He is a defender of His people. He is a constant victor over the great enemies of our lives. Sin, death, the devil. Those enemies will *never* overcome our God. And as David considers the attributes and actions of God it rallies his heart and mind to a greater and greater confidence and assurance and to a bold assertion that we see there in verse 3: "Even if an entire army comes against me by myself, I am not afraid!" That's quite a faith!

But we should notice that his great faith was not rooted in self but in God. His faith wasn't rooted in circumstances, but in the God who is *above* all circumstances. We should also notice that David does not expect God to remove every enemy or bypass every conflict. In fact, David knew that there were struggles and adversaries ahead. But that didn't bother him. Because his faith was producing a byproduct of hope. And he resolved within his heart to rely upon that hope and allow it to shape his attitudes. He drew a line and said, "My heart shall not fear." Because of who he knew God to be, because he knew the works that God had done, David was able to marshal his heart to behave faithfully and hopefully.

Psalm 27.4 - ⁴One *thing* I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

For all his flaws and mistakes, David had an incredible ability to focus on the most important thing in the situations of life. He could see the crucial issue and the weight of heaven in his circumstances. For example: When going to fight Goliath, all the other soldiers were saying, “No one can fight him! We need more height or more weapons or more armor.” But David said, “We don’t need any of that, because the Lord will fight for us.” Or, in that great moment of repentance after his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, David could *correctly* say, “Against [God] and God alone have I sinned.” His mind was fixed on the spiritual and the heavenly.

So here, in a time of desperate need, he was able to assess his heart and come to this conclusion: “What I really require is more of the presence of God. That’s the *one* thing. That’s what I want.” And not only did he *desire* it, he *asked* for it and he *went after* it! He said, “That *WILL* I seek.” Herbert Lockyer once wrote: “*Holy desires must lead to resolute action.*”

David’s heart longed for communion with God. He wanted to dwell in the temple and inquire after the Lord and explore His word. He wanted to spend his days enjoying the pleasantness of God. It was the pursuit of his life. And this man who, from our perspective, knew God so well said, “I’ve got *more* to discover. I’ve got *more* to inquire about. I’ve got *more* to take in and enjoy, so much so that it will take *all the days of my life.*” And he set his heart and his steps toward the presence of God.

Psalm 27.5 - ⁵For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

The Lord would provide two measures of defense for David. He would hide him *in* the pavilion and He would *set him on* a Rock.

The pavilion was the tent of God. He says there that he was not just *in* the tabernacle but in the *secret place* in it. There is a security and a help that is only known to the people of God. Because only God can bring the kind of peace to our hearts and minds that David demonstrates here. Only God can orchestrate the whole of life for our good when those around us mean it for evil. Outside of the fold of God we cannot know that kind of secret provision and protection.

But then he says that the Lord will set him high upon the rock. Of course we recognize that our Rock is Jesus Christ. Putting ourselves in the picture, we see that God secures us in Christ. He sets us high up in our Savior so that when people come looking for us, they will see the magnified Christ as the rock of our salvation. That when people see us, they will undoubtedly see the strength of Christ and the sufficiency of Christ and the greatness of Christ as we’re established in Him. The Lord hides us in plain sight! Because His plan is to make a testimony and a witness out of you and I that others may know the Savior and the power of His salvation.

Psalm 27.6 - ⁶And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.

God wants to get us up higher than the surface of the earth. His intention for us is not to stay broken down in the dumps, but to be high on the holy hill.

After remembering the Lord and thinking through His works and recounting all that the Lord does, David’s response was devotion and sacrifice and singing. The language there actually says, “I will sing and I will sing,” and that he would bring a “sacrifice of shouting” to the Lord. This victorious God deserves exuberant praise.

So, David had **recounted** the Lord and what He had done. Now in verses 7 through 12 we see David's **request**.

Psalm 27.7 - ⁷Hear, O Lord, *when I cry with my voice!* Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

Having a strong faith doesn't mean we don't have troubles or needs or moments of desperation. James Montgomery Boice writes: *"Don't you find that you are often both confident and anxious, trusting and fearful, or at least that your mood swings easily from one to the other? I do. It is part of what it means to be a weak human being."*

All of this talk of enemies and salvation reminded David of his hopelessness apart from God. He remembered his great need for God's mercy. God is love, but He is absolutely holy. Each one of us is dependent on the mercy of God.

Now here we see the very first part of David's request to the Lord was: 'Hear me!' David was obsessed with God listening and hearing him. Again and again in his songs we see him saying, "Hear me oh Lord, give ear to my words, listen when I cry!" Those emotional pleas should remind us of the theological fact that God does not ignore us. God does not ignore us. He hears and He sees and He knows. The Bible says that He is attentive to us and that we can have confidence that He hears our prayers.

David knew that God heard him, because he got an answer!

Psalm 27.8 - ⁸When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, Lord, I will seek."

When David prayed, God's answer was, apparently, "Seek My face." David was praying to the Lord, "Please respond! React! Move on my behalf!" And the Lord answered, "You seek *Me*. Inquire after *Me*." And David received that. Having gotten an answer from the Lord, he determined to do what God told him to do. "Your face, Lord, I will seek."

The face. So often we want the Lord's ear or, especially we want His arm, but let us be people who seek His face. His countenance and presence in intimate communion.

Psalm 27.9 - ⁹Do not hide Your face from me; do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Having had a taste of that communion, now David was fixated on that face. "Lord, do not hide it! Don't take it away! That's where I find my peace. That's where I find my help. Lord, shine on me as I sit with You."

This week another one of those ludicrous articles came out where some supposed expert created an artistic composite of what he thinks Jesus looked like. We look forward to the day when we'll finally see Jesus face to face. But in the mean time, we can walk in the light of His countenance. We can pursue His presence and that should be the one great desire of our lives. And the absence of God's presence should be terrifying and unacceptable to us.

Psalm 27.10 - ¹⁰When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.

God is more than a Master, He is a kind and loving Father. He will not abandon or reject His children.

When David was a boy and Samuel came to town to anoint the next king over Israel, his father Jesse paraded all his brothers out in a line, and each one was refused by God. Jesse didn't even call David in to watch the thing. He rejected David as eligible to even attend. But God received him. And that is the kind of Father He is to us as well. He will not reject His people and He will never leave us or forsake us.

Psalm 27.11 - ¹¹Teach me Your way, O Lord, and lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.

The more David considered his life and considered the Lord, the more he wanted in. His thoughts of God generated a greater desire to follow God and live a Godly life. He remembered the reality of his enemies, but his thoughts were consumed with knowing the Lord more and making progress in the spiritual life, knowing more of God's path and presence. And, again, even David needed instruction and teaching. Spiritual graduation doesn't take place in this life - it is reserved for the next.

Psalm 27.12 - ¹²Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence.

The end of David's request indicates that he was in the middle of a present, urgent threat and crisis. But that didn't stop him from worshipping and enjoying the Lord and getting his heart right and writing this song. While others were breathing out violence, he was breathing our praise.

What about me? What am I breathing out? Violence? Complaining? Criticism? God help us to be people who breath our grace and praise in the situations of life.

We've seen David recount and request, now in verses 13 and 14 we come to the resolution.

Psalm 27.13 - ¹³I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

His faith in God was not just for the eternal realm, but it impacted his present circumstances. What good is faith if it does not apply to reality? David said, "I would've lost hope if this was all theoretical or mystical. This needs to be actual to make a difference."

In the land of the living God intends to reach out to us and strengthen us and lift us up and teach us and reveal to us as we seek Him.

Finally, verse 14:

Psalm 27.14 - ¹⁴Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!

David does not want us to miss out on what he's got. Here at the close he gives a prescription so the reader can get in on all this. If we want this kind of peace, this kind of hope, this kind of strength, here's what we do: Wait. Enjoy the Lord. Commune with Him. Wait some more. It says 'wait' and 'be'. Be strengthened. Be filled. Be excited about your faith.

Waiting on the Lord is a tough lesson. It's one I've had a hard time learning in my own life. To the natural man it can feel excruciating. But the spiritual man bursts out in growth when we wait on the presence of the Lord. Because spiritual waiting isn't hibernating. It's active. It's worshipful. It's hopeful. It's the proper position to receive. It can be difficult, but it is key. Take it from David, who had more than a little to say to us about these things.

Wait on the Lord. He is our light and our salvation. He is our strength and our shield. And He is ready to commune with us right now as we recount to ourselves who He is and what He does, as we bring our requests to Him and as we resolve to be His people, waiting in His presence.