

FBC POWELL, 3-19-17 AM
"Whom Shall I Fear?"
Psalm 27:1-14
7 in Series: "Psalms: Medicine for the Soul"

I. A Confession of Confidence in the Lord (vv. 1-6)

2 Samuel 22:2b "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer..."

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (ESV) "and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 4:15 "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God."

Hebrews 13:5b, 6a "for He Himself has said... so that we confidently say..."

"Faith is acting like God is telling the truth."

Faith is not so much receiving from God what we want; it is accepting from God what He allows and then seeing Him glorified in the midst of it.

A. Confidence in the Lord's Adequacy (v. 1a)

1 John 1:5-7 "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."

John 1:4 "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Colossians 3:4b "...Christ, who is our life..."

B. Confidence in the Lord's Deliverance (vv. 1b-3)

C. Confidence in the Lord's Protection (vv. 4-6)

"Psalms 27:4 (AMP) "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek, inquire for, *and* [insistently] require: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord [in His presence] all the days of my life, to behold *and* gaze upon the beauty [the sweet attractiveness and the delightful loveliness] of the Lord and to meditate, consider, *and* inquire in His temple."

1 Thessalonians 5:17 "pray without ceasing."

II. A Crying Out to the Lord (vv. 7-14)

Lament – a passionate expression of grief.

Psalm 34:18 “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Psalm 116:2 “Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.”

Luke 19:41-44 “When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.’”

A. Seek His Face (vv. 7-8)

B. Seek His Nearness (vv. 9-10)

Hebrews 13:5b “for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’”

Psalms 27:10b (HCSB) “the Lord cares for me.”

C. Seek His Guidance (v. 11)

D. Seek His Protection (vv. 12-13)

E. Seek Courageous Patience (v. 14)

First Baptist Church Powell 03 19 17 AM

Sermon 7: Whom Shall I Fear?

Psalm 27:1-14

Series: Psalms: Medicine for the Soul

Someone said, “Fear has many faces, and they’re all ugly.” I haven’t personally counted, but I’ve read that the most repeated command in the Bible is “fear not.” Perhaps the reason there are so many commands to “fear not” is because in a fallen world, when we face life limited by our own resources, we have a lot to fear. The more complicated life becomes, the more we are tempted to fear. Also, the more knowledge we have, the more opportunities we have to fear.

There is an old adage that says, “Ignorance is bliss.” That’s certainly not completely true, but there is some truth to it. The more we know, the more we fear that we’re not doing it right. I

remember several years ago a study was released that said, “Coffee causes pancreatic cancer.” The very next day another study was released that said, “Coffee decreases the risk of getting pancreatic cancer.”

When it comes to raising children, there is no shortage of information about methods of training and disciplining children. Parents read about these methods, seek to implement them, and then a new study comes out that says all the old studies are wrong. With the rise of the internet, there is no end to the information we are bombarded with.

We, as a nation, live in fear over what we eat (or don't eat), how we are raising our children, and what we are told we can expect in the future. Add to the mix increasing terror threats, increasing crime, and sexual abuse of children by authority figures. Who of us would have believed twenty years ago that gender would be determined not by a person's biological makeup, but by how they feel about themselves? What a temptation it is to fall into a state of paralyzing, thought consuming, continual fear.

I know of no clearer, and helpful, passage in the Bible that deals with fear than Psalm 27. This Psalm starts with a confession of truth about fear. It is bold and speaks of victory over fear. However, after verse 6, you see a man who is truly struggling with a broken heart and a plea for the Lord to not abandon him. The contrast is so pronounced that some “scholars” believe that this is really two Psalms written by two different men. One was victorious over fear and one had succumbed to fear. I reject that line of reasoning. What we have in Psalm 27 is a picture of reality. We all fit this pattern. I think of the Old Testament hero, Elijah. Immediately after Elijah's great victory over the prophets of Baal, he is threatened, and succumbs to the temptation of fear when he is threatened by the Queen of Israel, Jezebel. He single handedly killed 450 prophets of Baal and then ran over thirty miles from one woman. When he finally stopped, he sat under a juniper tree and prayed for God to take his life. I am convinced that there is only one human author of this Psalm; we need to hear David's lament in verses 7-14, as well as his confession of the truth in verses 1-6.

I. A Confession of Confidence in the Lord (vv. 1-6)

David begins this Psalm with strong statement of confidence in the Lord's deliverance from all that stands against him. The Lord is our deliverer. 2 Samuel 22:2b: “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer...” 1 Thessalonians 1:10 (ESV): “and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” The One who is our deliverer wills to deliver us from everything that would hold us in bondage – and that includes fear. His deliverance often waits on our response of faith.

Let me share a concept about faith that is often overlooked. The primary way that faith is activated is by our confession of God's truth and promises. The word “confess” means to say with or to agree. When it comes to confessing sin, we simply stop rationalizing our sin and agree with God about our sin. 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

We are to confess more than sin. We also need to confess that what God says is true. We see an example of that faith confession in 1 John 4:15: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” Confession is an act of faith, counting what God says about us, about Himself, or about our situation as true whether it feels true or looks true. I choose to agree with what God says because He is trustworthy and His Word is inspired, infallible, inerrant, and authoritative. I must confess what God says when I don't sense it in my feelings and when my mind can't fully comprehend it.

My favorite definition of faith is, “Faith is acting like God is telling the truth.” A part of that “acting like” is to confess His Word as truth. I am not talking about the unscriptural excesses of the word of faith movement that confesses verses (or even small parts of verses) taken out of context. For instance, I cannot confess my instantaneous physical healing or anyone else’s healing. Nowhere are we told in Scripture that God always heals His children when they claim it. What I can do is confess Romans 8:28-29 that He is working my trial for good because I love Him and I am called according to His purpose. I can confess that His enabling grace will be sufficient for me because He says that in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

I cannot confess that God is going to make me successful in business, enable me to buy a new \$2,000,000 home, and drive a Bentley. I can confess that if I am faithful in giving, according to Philippians 4:19 He will supply all of my genuine needs (and He gets to define what a need is). I can confess when I am facing a decision that He is giving me wisdom to make the correct decision because James 1:5 promises that. *Faith is not so much receiving from God what we want; it is accepting from God what He allows and then seeing Him glorified in the midst of it.*

When the Psalmist feels fear sweeping over him, he begins to confess the promises of God and the power of God. In our day when feelings rule, some would have you believe that if you confess something you don’t feel, you would be a hypocrite. If what you are confessing is that what God says is true (however you feel), you are not a hypocrite; you are simply trusting God!

A. Confidence in the Lord’s Adequacy (v. 1a)

David, in confessing the truth of who God is, begins by confessing that the Lord is his light. Note that he doesn’t say that the Lord gives light; he says that the Lord is his light.

Light in the Bible symbolizes at least two things:

First, light symbolizes purity. 1 John 1:5-7: “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” When I confess that He is my light, I am confessing that He is the source of my purity or holiness. I can live a pure life, a holy life because I have the source of purity and holiness living in me.

Light also symbolizes life. Speaking of God the Son, Jesus Christ, we read in John 1:4: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” To confess that He is my light is to confess that He is my life. Colossians 3:4b: “...Christ, who is our life...” Our Savior is more than adequate to take us through any trial, problem or crisis. He is our light – our purity because He has taken away our sin, and He is our life since we have Christ in us.

Not only is He my light, He is my salvation. The Hebrew word here translated “salvation” comes from a root that means to make wide or sufficient. It is the picture of making a way of escape, deliverance or rescue. When I am in Christ, I will always have a way of rescue or deliverance. When I am fearful, the Lord is my deliverer, my rescuer, my way of escape. Many times He does not take us immediately out of the circumstances or conditions that are overwhelming us, but changes us so that we trust in Him and are no longer overwhelmed. He is oftentimes more glorified in giving us victory over the circumstance(s) that had been making us fearful than He would have been by taking it away. In light of the fact that He is our light and our salvation, the question, “Whom shall I fear?” has the obvious answer, “No one or no thing.”

B. Confidence in the Lord's Deliverance (vv. 1b-3)

Let's look carefully at what the Psalmist is doing here. He is being overwhelmed by a sense of dread and fear over what might happen. Let's admit that fear is the source of our feeling overwhelmed so many times. To combat his fears, the Psalmist is dealing in, what I call, "worst case scenarios." He is laying out the most horrible things that could happen. In verses 2, 3 he is referring to vicious enemy armies which would come and surround him. Even then there is no reason to fear. The Lord is stronger than any army; He is omnipotent!

When you are feeling overwhelmed, and have fear and dread of what might happen, that begins to make us worse and worse — STOP! What is the worst thing that could happen? Is it feeling overwhelmed with financial pressures and job insecurity? What is the worst case scenario? You lose your home and vehicles. You are homeless and have to live under a bridge, in a box. Is God still sovereign and on His throne? Is He not the God of all power? Can He not give you a waterproof box, protect you, give you a ministry to the homeless, and enable you to glorify Him, and more clearly see his beauty and majesty with all the stuff cleared away? Can He not supply you with the necessities of life? He is strong and mighty; why fear?

When I talk about worst case scenarios, I'm not talking about pessimism and fatalism. I'm saying that when you confess that God is sufficient, even when that which we dread happens, He will strengthen us and enable us with His grace. When you respond in this way, you have taken away the enemy's tool to cause you to be paralyzed by fear, to be overwhelmed, joyless, and ineffective in the mission that God has called you to. He says in the last part of verse 3, "In spite of this I shall be confident."

C. Confidence in the Lord's Protection (vv. 4-6)

Listen to the Amplified translation of verse four. "Psalms 27:4 (AMP):

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek, inquire for, *and* [insistently] require: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord [in His presence] all the days of my life, to behold *and* gaze upon the beauty [the sweet attractiveness and the delightful loveliness] of the Lord and to meditate, consider, *and* inquire in His temple.

David's confidence was from being in the lord's presence constantly. This is what some call "practicing the presence of God." It is a life of continual worship and awareness of his watching, and sovereign management, over all we are experiencing. This was before the temple was built and when David talked about the house of the Lord, he was speaking of living with an awareness of His presence. This is what is spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "pray without ceasing." It is living in communion with the Lord. A daily quiet time that we encourage people to establish is sometimes misunderstood. It is not a time when we listen to God through His Word, and then spend time in prayer, and end it by checking "time with the Lord" off of our list so we say goodbye to Him and then tell Him we'll call on Him if something big comes up that we cannot handle ourselves. The purpose of the quiet time in the morning is to connect with Him early so that we can dwell in His presence all through the day! When He is your focus, nothing can overwhelm you. When you are fearful, confess that He is your shelter; he is the rock of stability; abide in Him; walk in communion with him throughout the day!

Verse 6 is a description of coming out from under the fear that has been overwhelming us. Now David rises up out of the depths and begins to see from God's perspective. There is no indication that he has been delivered from the circumstance that had been overwhelming him. The circumstance wasn't changed, but the person in the circumstance was changed. Now, from God's

perspective, he sees the enemy as being under God, under His sovereignty, and the result is rejoicing.

II. A Crying Out to the Lord (vv. 7-14)

This section of Psalm 27 is called by scholars a “lament.” There are multiple laments in the Psalms and for that I am grateful. A lament is defined as a passionate expression of grief. It is the cry of a heart that is full of anguish and heartache. We are told in Psalm 34:18: “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Lament from a hurting heart is not rebuked by the Lord. Psalm 116:2: “Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.” The Lord inclines His ear to those who are of heavy heart. The view that, as a believer, we are to always be like a freshman cheerleader at her first ball game is not in Scripture. We need in churches to give room for lament. It is not a lack of faith. Your faith can be just fine, but your heart may be broken. Jesus lamented over His rejection by Jerusalem. Luke 19:41-44:

When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”

Understand that the enemy seeks to turn a God pleasing lament to discouragement, depression, and hopelessness. That does not please the Lord. In the remaining verses in Psalm 27 we see how to handle a lament, a genuine sorrow resulting in genuine grief.

A. Seek His Face (vv. 7-8)

He first calls out for God’s mercy. It is in His mercy that He delivers us from our legitimate lament. One of the old timers called mercy the hope of sinners and the refuge of saints. His point in verse 8 is that whatever is hurting us or burdening us constitutes a call to God to seek His face. In the Old Testament, seeking God’s hand signified seeking His action, and seeking His face was seeking His pleasure or His will.

If you are broken hearted today, seek his pleasure and nearness, and seek it diligently. The pattern is that you confess his truth and seek his face on what His exact will is for the thing that is weighing you down. God can typically do more in your life in one year of trouble and heavy burdens than twenty-five years when everything is going smooth. That’s not because God is powerless to do anything when things are going smoothly; it is because we don’t usually cry out to Him, and seek His face, until we start getting desperate.

B. Seek His Nearness (vv. 9-10)

It is hard to believe that this is the same David that wrote Psalm 27:3! This is a part of being human and living in a fallen world where we are hurt, disappointed, rejected, and often perplexed. In some way that we are not aware of, even those closest to David had in some way forsaken him. In his lament, he pleads with the Lord not to forsake him. On this side of the cross, we have a promise that speaks to this burden on the psalmist’s heart. Hebrews 13:5b: “for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’” Even if our closest

human relationships break down, and we are forsaken even by mother and father, God will not forsake His own.

C. Seek His Guidance (v. 11)

David is saying, “Lord, I want to learn what You have to teach me in this tough time.” The word “Level” in verse 11 doesn’t mean easy. It is translated “straight” in the NIV. He is saying, “Father, lead me in straight paths of righteousness and deliver me from my enemies who would love to bring me down.” He is basically saying that he is resting in the will of God as he goes through tough times. He is not saying, “I have a solution and I want you to bless it.” He is resting in God’s will and yielded completely to it.

D. Seek His Protection (vv. 12-13)

In verse 12, David is speaking of real enemies – people who want to do him harm. In verse 13, he confesses that, in spite of circumstances that are painful, God is good and is working all the tough times for his good. Listen carefully: God is good even when His will is painful and when our heart laments over what has happened, over those who have turned against us and even seek to harm us. The key, during times like these, is to focus on the Lord, refuse to become bitter and hardened, and affirm the goodness of the Lord even in your pain.

E. Seek Courageous Patience (v. 14)

God’s delays are not God’s denials! Someone has accurately said that it takes as much courage to wait as it does to war. God always operates on His timetable – not ours. The Hebrew word “wait” doesn’t mean to sit around and twiddle your thumbs. It literally means to wait in expectancy, to look for patiently, to be confident. That’s why you can be of good courage – you are waiting with expectancy that God is going to work, to heal our damaged emotions, to guide, to enable, to mature us, and to glorify Himself. There is no need for fear!

Conclusion

What are you afraid of today? Is your heart in a period of lament over hurt and disappointment? Psalm 27:1: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?”