

Psalm 27

[A Psalm] of David.

Psalm 27 is structured so that the psalmist's expressions of confident trust include his prayer for deliverance. David first expresses his complete confidence and trust in his God (verses 1-6). On this basis, he then feels free to present his petition for deliverance from his enemies (verses 7-12). Finally, he returns full-circle to the trust previously stated as the only proper attitude on one who must now wait for God to act (verses 13-14).

Verses 1-14: This psalm is characterized by strong contrasts such as lament and laud; persecution and praise; plus warfare and worship. In Psalm 27, the psalmist, in the presence of his Lord, engages in 3 conversations which help him balance the ups and downs of real life.

- I. He Converses with Himself about Privileges (27:1-6);
- II. He Converses with the Lord about Problems (27:7-12);
- III. He Converses with Himself about Perseverance (27:13-14).

Verses 1-6: Here is how David dealt with his fear and trouble: he looked to his confidence and his "salvation", God. When believers encounter trouble, and puts worshiping God as the center ("one thing") of their lives, He lifts their heads and hearts (18:28; 84:11). Seeing the greatness of Almighty God changes one's perspective on trouble (3:6; 14:4).

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?"

"Light": This important biblical word picture with exclusively positive connotations pictures the light of redemption in contrast to the darkness of condemnation (compare Psalms 18:28; 36:9; 43:3; Isa. 60:1, 19-20; Micah 7:8; John 8:12; 12:46; 1 John 1:5).

We have spoken so many times about the Light. Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. When we truly receive the Lord Jesus in His fullness, we are overwhelmed in our inner being with this great Light. Let us look, just one more time, at exactly what happens when we are truly saved.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Christ liveth in me. if Christ lives in me then I am full of His Light, because He is the Light of the world. Light does away with darkness. To have Christ (the Light), in me, means His Light has dissipated (done away with), all darkness within me. Many people who profess Christianity say, they are possessed of a demon within them. This is an impossibility. Light destroys darkness. You cannot be full of Light and full of darkness at the same time. He is our salvation also.

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Jesus means Savior. He is our salvation. Fear is lack of faith. All throughout the Bible, we are taught not to fear except to fear or reverence God. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, you will find a very long list of those who did not fear, but had faith in God. Faith pleases God. The following verse that Jesus spoke sums this verse up completely.

Acts 26:18 "To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Psalm 27:2 "When the wicked, [even] mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell."

"Eat up my flesh": An allusion to the psalmist's enemies being like vicious beasts (compare Psalms 7:2; 14:4; 17:12; Job 19:22; Jer. 30:16; 50:7). This wording was also employed to describe slander and defamation (compare a close Aramaic parallel in Dan. 3:8; 6:24).

"They stumbled and fell": These two words convey a thorough defeat (compare Isa. 3:8; 8:15; 31:3; Jer. 46:6).

David had so many enemies who were trying to destroy him from every side. The worst were some of his own household who turned against him and wanted to utterly destroy him. Can you relate to this problem that David had? I surely can relate to this. His enemies and our enemies trying to destroy us will stumble and fall, because God will fight our battle for us.

Psalm 27:3 "Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this [will] I [be] confident."

Though a host of the ungodly, as the Targum. Though ever so many of them, even ten thousands of them (as in Psalm 3:6); should beset him on every side.

My heart shall not fear, for not only the angels of the Lord encamped about him, as they do about all that fear the Lord; but salvation was appointed for walls and bulwarks about him. Yea, the Lord himself was a wall of fire around him, and he was kept as in a garrison by the power of God.

"Though war should rise against me": Though it should be proclaimed, and though all preparation should be made for it, I will not be afraid.

"In this will I be confident": Either in this war, in the midst of it; or in this that he had expressed (Psalm 27:1). That the Lord was his light, his salvation, and the strength of his life. So the Jewish writers: or as others, in this one thing, desired in (Psalm 27:4). But either of the former senses is best, especially the latter of them. Saints need not be afraid, though there is a war within them between the flesh and spirit. And though without are fightings with Satan and his principalities

and powers. Since they may be confident of victory, and that they are more than conquerors, through Christ that has loved them.

We have already related in these lessons about Gideon's army, and how God took just a handful of His people, and destroyed a mighty host of the enemy. David remembering this, could take courage and know that no harm will come to him. War may come even to us, but we should feel no alarm. God is our protector.

Psalms 91:7 "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; [but] it shall not come nigh thee."

If we are covered in the blood of Jesus, the enemy will flee. It was the shed blood of Jesus our Christ that defeated Satan.

Psalm 27:4 "One [thing] have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; 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."

“One thing”: The primary issue in David’s life was to live in God’s presence and by His purpose (compare Psalms 15:1; 23:6; compare Paul’s “one thing” in Phil. 3:13).

This desire that David speaks here, is the desire of all believers. The most beautiful answer to David's prayer and our prayer for the same thing is found in the following Scriptures.

John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." "In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also."

The tabernacle in the wilderness was patterned after the great temple in the heavens. Everyone who ever lived has desired to live forever. The Christian desires to live in heaven forever. Wherever Jesus is will be heaven to me. We are told that the believers in Christ will be gathered around His beautiful throne in heaven.

Revelation 7:9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"

Revelation 7:13-14 "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?" "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Psalm 27:5 "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock."

“His tabernacle”: David portrays the privileges of divine protection as being hidden in God’s “pavilion” or “tabernacle”, a term in parallelism with “shelter” or “tent”.

Christians would say, build a hedge around me Lord that my enemies cannot get to me. David's security, as our security, is in the Lord. Jesus Christ is the Rock of foundation that we should build upon. If I am on the Rock, the storms may come but I will not be moved.

Psalm 27:6 "And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD."

That is, when brought into the house of the Lord, hid in the secret of his tabernacle, and set upon the rock Christ. By this phrase he means, either that he should be then restored to his former happy and comfortable condition, as it is used in Genesis 40:13; or that he should overcome all his enemies, and triumph over them, being exalted, as he adds:

“Above mine enemies round about me”. So that not only they should not be able to come at him, but should be subdued under him.

“Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy”. Attended with shouting and sounding of trumpets, in allusion to the blowing of trumpets at the time of sacrifice, Numbers 10:10. Sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, with a joyful heart, for mercies received, offered up publicly in the house of the Lord, are here intended.

“I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord”. For whom praise waits in Zion, to whom it is due. He being the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, and the author and giver of all blessings, temporal and spiritual.

This song is a song of victory. David has made up his mind even before the battle starts, that he will be victorious. This celebrating was not for himself but was actually songs and praises to God. Notice that David reminds God that he will go to the place of worship and sing praises to God. When victory comes, many times we forget who won the victory, and we forget to praise God for it.

Psalm 27:7 "Hear, O LORD, [when] I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me."

Which is to be understood of prayer, and that in the time of distress. And of vocal prayer, as distinguished from mental prayer; and the phrase denotes the vehemence and intenseness of it. And the request is, that the Lord would hear it; not only as he is omniscient and omnipresent, and so hears the prayers of all, good and bad. But as a God gracious and merciful. Who sometimes very quickly hears, and answers in a gracious way, and sometimes seems to turn a deaf ear. To shut out the prayers of his people, and cover himself with a cloud, that they should not pass through. Or, however, defers an answer to it for a little while; yet, sooner or later, he always shows himself a God hearing prayer.

"Have mercy also upon me": By delivering him out of his temporal distresses, and by forgiving his iniquities.

"And answer me": By speaking a word in season; commanding off the affliction he lay under, and by saying to him that his sins were forgiven him.

David feels that his deeds will not get answers from God. Our good deeds will not get us audience with God either. It is the mercy of God that He even listens to our prayers and then answers them. Look with me at just one related Scripture that truly explains this.

Titus 3:5 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

God does hear every prayer. He has mercy and helps us when we cry out to Him.

Verses 8-9: "Seek ye my face ... thy face ... thy face": God's "face" indicates His personal presence or simply His being (Psalms 24:6; 105:4); and seeking His face is a primary characteristic of true believers who desire fellowship with God (compare Deut. 4:29; 2 Chron. 11:16; 20:4; Psalm 40:16; Jer. 50:4; Hosea 3:5; Zech. 8:22).

Psalm 27:8 "[When thou saidst], Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek."

To seek the face of the Lord is to attend his house and ordinances, where he grants his presence. And with this view to enjoy his gracious presence, and the light of his countenance, not being content with bare attendance without it. It is to seek the Lord himself, and communion with him through Christ, the brightness of his glory, and the Angel of his presence. For the right way of seeking the Lord is in Christ, who is the way of access to him, and of acceptance and fellowship with him. And that by prayer and supplication for his sake, and with all your heart and soul. And this the Lord calls upon his people to do. In his word, in his providences, and by his Spirit moving upon their hearts, and inclining them to it, as follows.

"My heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek": It is an encouragement to believers to seek the Lord when he calls them to it. For it is a command with promise, that they shall find him, see his face, and enjoy his favor. And he never says to any, "seek ye my face, in vain"; and they always find it good for them to draw nigh to him. And as it is the best way of seeking God, when the heart is engaged in it, so it is a token for good. And it looks as though the Lord had a mind to manifest himself, and grant the favor sought for, when he inclines the hearts of his people to pray unto him for it. And this the psalmist makes mention of as taking encouragement from it, to hope and believe that the Lord would hear and answer him, and have mercy on him. Because he had bid him seek his face, and he found his heart ready to do it.

Jesus is coming back for those who are looking for Him. Seek Him and you shall find Him. David was instructed to seek the face of God. We too, must seek the face (will) of God in our life.

Colossians 3:1 "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Verses 9-14: When David prayed in his time of trouble, he realized how dependent he was on God's provision. In humble submission, he sought the Lord's "face" (His presence, His counsel, His fellowship), and then resolved to "wait" for and do whatever God told him to do (69:17; 86:11).

Psalm 27:9 "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."

"Hide not thy face far from me": Which, in obedience to thy command, I am now seeking. Let me never want the reviving sense of thy favor. Love me, and give me to know that thou lovest me.

"Put not thy servant away in anger": Do not turn me off, or put me away in displeasure. We turn one away, or do not admit him into our presence, with whom we are displeased. The psalmist prayed that he might have free access to God as a Friend.

"Thou hast been my Help": Ever in the past I have had thee for my Helper (compare Psalm 3:3-7; 4:1; 6:8-10; 18:2). God's goodness to us in the past must always be our chief ground of confidence in him for the future.

"Leave me not, neither forsake me": This is still a proper ground of pleading with God. We may refer to all His former mercies toward us. We may make mention of those mercies as a reason why He should now interpose and save us. We may, so to speak, "remind" him of His former favors and friendship, and may plead with Him that He will complete what He has begun. And that, having once admitted us to His favor, He will never leave or forsake us.

"O God of my salvation": The author both of his temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; and what might he not hope for from him? salvation includes all blessings, both for soul and body, for time and eternity (compare Psalm 94:14).

Have you ever prayed and felt that God was hiding from you and did not hear your prayer? This is what David is praying against here. The God of the Christian's salvation is Jesus Christ. The promise of God to man is, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

Psalm 27:10 "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up."

"When my father and mother forsake me": That is, the nearest and dearest friends I have in the world, from whom I may expect most relief, and with most reason. When they either die, or are at a distance from me, or are unable to help me in the time of need. Or are unkind to me, or unmindful of me, and will not help me. When I am as helpless as every poor orphan was that was left fatherless and motherless.

Even though those nearest and dearest to David might abandon him, his Lord would always be concerned about and care for him (compare Deut. 31:6, 8; Isa. 49:14-15; Heb. 13:5).

"Then I know the Lord will take me up": Like a foundling in the street, and such are called, in the Rabbinic writings, "persons gathered up". And so the words may be rendered here, "then the Lord will gather me". Into his arms and bosom, and under the wings of his protection, and at last to himself in glory.

Never in history has there been a time where parents have forsaken their children, as there is now. Poor little babies are found abandoned in all sorts of places. 2 Timothy describes just such an era as we are living in. One of the statements it makes about this generation is that, they are lacking in natural affection. The wonderful promise that we have from God tells us that He will never leave us. Children, you may feel alone and unloved, but God loves you and is always there when you need Him.

Psalm 27:11 "Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies."

What course I shall take to please thee, and to discharge my duty, and to save myself from ruin?

"And lead me in a plain path": As the path of truth is to those that understand and find knowledge. And as the way of holiness is, even to such who in other things are fools, but shall not err therein (Prov. 8:9; Isaiah 35:8). Or the path of righteousness, in which Christ, the wisdom of God, and shepherd of his people, leads them (Psalm 23:3).

"Because of mine enemies": Or "those that observe me". Who eyed him as Saul did (1 Sam. 18:9). And waited for his faltering, as Jeremiah's companions did for him. And lay in wait to deceive him, and lead him out of the way, as false teachers do. And come upon him at an unawares, and take every advantage against him, as Satan does.

The way to everlasting life is not a broad and easy way. It is a narrow, straight path. Look at the next Scripture which verifies that.

Matthew 7:14 "Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

This Scripture was spoken by Jesus. Notice in the verse above which path we should be seeking. The path means not the way we want to go, but the way God would have us go. David has enemies on every side who would like to destroy him. Christians have enemies, who would like to destroy them also. It was the church people of Jesus' day who tried the hardest to destroy Him.

Brothers and sisters in Christ from different denominations are sometimes each other's worst enemies. Why can't we realize we will all have to live together in heaven? We might as well try to learn to get along here on the earth.

Psalm 27:12 "Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty."

It is a dreadful thing for a man to be given up to his own heart's lusts, and to be delivered up into the hands of Satan. Who would gladly have even the people of God themselves in his hands. That he might distress them at pleasure, if not destroy them. And also to be suffered to fall into the hands of wicked men, whose tender mercies are cruel.

"For false witnesses are risen up against me": The party which attached itself to Absalom accused David of cruelty to the house of Saul (2 Sam. 16:8). And probably of other crimes and misdemeanors. Absalom himself accused him of a failure in his kingly duties (2 Sam. 15:8).

"And such as breathe out cruelty": Or, violence. That is, they meditate violence or cruel treatment. They are intent on this; they pant for it. Saul of Tarsus thus "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (see the notes at Acts 9:1).

Jesus was condemned by false witnesses. They really had nothing to accuse Him of worthy of any punishment, let alone death. The will of David's enemies was to destroy him. The will of our enemies is to get rid of us. The will of Jesus' enemies was to crucify Him. The greatest cruelty was the crucifixion of Jesus without a cause. I believe the statement (breathe out), means their spirit wanted Him destroyed. The breath of man has to do with his spirit.

Psalm 27:13 "[I had fainted], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

The words "I had fainted" are supplied by the translators, but they undoubtedly express the true sense of the passage. The psalmist refers to the state of mind produced by the efforts of his enemies to destroy him, as mentioned in (Psalm 27:12). So numerous, mighty, and formidable were they, that he says his only support was his faith in God. His belief that he would yet be permitted to see the goodness of God upon the earth. In this time of perplexity and trial he had confidence in God, and believed that He would uphold him. And would permit him to see the evidences of His goodness and mercy while yet on the earth.

"To see the goodness of the Lord": By which he means, not only a continuance of the mercy and grace of God to his soul which he already possessed, and which supported him under his trials. But that he should outlive his troubles, and see or enjoy in this life that deliverance from them, and from all his enemies, implied in the promise of the kingdom which God had given him.

"In the land of the living": I.e. in this world, which is oft so called (as Job 28:13 Psalm 52:5; 116:9; 142:5; Isa. 38:11; 53:8; Jer. 11:9; Ezek. 32:32). And is opposed to the grave, which is the place of the dead. And David was thus earnestly desirous of this mercy in this life. Not because he placed his portion in these things, which he so solemnly disclaims (Psalm 17:14). But because

the truth and glory of God were highly concerned in making good the promise of the kingdom made to him.

The faint in the verse above, really means lost hope. His hope was in the goodness of the Lord. We Christians are not like the world, who have no hope. We have hope of the resurrection. The land of the living is the land of eternal life. We too would be ready to give up, if this life was all there was. but we too have tasted of the goodness of God and have hopes of everlasting life in the land of the living.

Psalm 27:14 "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."

“Wait ... wait”: This particular word for waiting connotes either a tense or eager and patient anticipation of the Lord (compare Psalms 37:34; 40:1).

This is the sum of all the instruction in the psalm. The main lesson which the psalm is designed to convey. The object is to induce others, from the experience of the psalmist, to trust in the Lord. To rely upon Him; to come to Him in trouble and danger; and to wait for His interposition when all other resources fail (compare Psalm 25:3).

"Be of good courage": The Hebrew word here means, "be strong." That is, do not faint. Do not be dismayed. Still hope and trust in the Lord.

"He shall strengthen thine heart": He will strengthen "thee." He will enable you to perform your duties, and to triumph over your enemies (see notes at Isa. 40:31).

"Wait, I say, on the Lord": Repeating an idea with which the heart was full. A lesson resulting from his own rich experience. He dwells upon it as a lesson which he would fix deeply in the mind, that in all times of danger and difficulty, instead of despondency, instead of sinking down in despair, instead of giving up all effort, we should go forward in the discharge of duty, putting our trust solely in the Lord.

Notice in the next verse, what the world says to those of us who are looking for the coming of Christ.

2 Peter 3:4 "And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation."

God cannot and will not lie. He said He was Coming again, and I believe He is. The following Scripture describes what Christian's should be doing.

Titus 2:13 "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;"

The world around us may look as if it is falling apart, but we should look up and rejoice, for our redemption draweth nigh.

Luke 21:28 "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Psalm 27 Questions

1. The Lord is my _____ and my _____.
2. The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be _____?
3. When we truly receive the Lord Jesus Christ in His fullness, what happens to us?
4. What does away with darkness?
5. What does dissipated mean?
6. What is fear?
7. What is the only thing permissible to fear?
8. How could you sum up verse 1 of this lesson?
9. Why will our enemies, who try to destroy us, stumble and fall?
10. What specifically defeated Satan?
11. In verse 4 of this lesson, what was the one thing he sought after?
12. What promise did Jesus make to all the believers in John 14:1-3?
13. Who is the Rock of our salvation?
14. The celebrating David was doing in verse 6, was actually what?
15. It is the _____ of God that He listens and answers our prayers.
16. Who is Jesus coming back for?
17. Where is Christ sitting now?
18. Who is the God of the Christian's salvation?
19. What does the statement (lacking in natural affection) mean?
20. When your mother and father abandon you, who can you depend on?
21. The way to everlasting life is a _____ path.

22. Jesus was condemned by _____.
23. What was the will of Jesus' enemies?
24. What is (faint) in verse 13 really speaking of?
25. What is the Christian's hope?
26. What is the land of the living?
27. What does the world say to those who are expecting the return of the Lord?
28. What should Christians be doing, while they are waiting for the return of the Lord?