

Protection & Provision // Psalm 127 // Image Church // March 18, 2018

Intro

Hello, my name is Aaron Turner, and I am the XP here at Image Church. Over the last few weeks it has been amazing to see God work here ~~at Image Church~~. We are officially 9 weeks old and from my viewpoint it's been incredible watching things happen. Being the kind of person who spends most of my time behind the scenes, let me tell you a little about myself.

I am from LA – that's Lower Alabama; a small town outside of Mobile. The kind of town where the only stores around are the Piggly Wiggly and Dollar General. The kind of town with only one traffic light. And growing up in the deep south I feel we have a different set of words and phrases than the rest of the country called...

Southernism

To get a better understanding of what I mean, I put together a short list of things said to me or I said growing up. ...you may have heard OR some of you may use these; no judgement here. Here are a few just to give you an idea.

BYH (bless your heart)

Hit the Lights (meaning turn off the lights)

Roll Tide/War Eagle (can be fighting words and words of love).

Lord willing and the creek don't rise (no clue what this means)

Finer than frog hair – Really?

~~Tell the truth and shame the devil.~~

Don't be ugly (I guess I will do my best)

~~I tell you what! (what? What are you telling me?)~~

~~Probably the most common is...~~

You just have to **“Trust the Lord”**

We have all heard this before, and most of us have said this phrase

“trust the lord for...”

- The parking spot you can't find – carry underwood.
- The vacation home we have always used is booked
- The free chicken sandwich receipt at chick-fil-a.
- ~~The job interview goes well and you know you will get the offer...~~ just have to trust the lord

The Lord is trust is worthy of every situation but it feels different when the matters are heavier

Will the Lord...

- Protect me?
- Provide for me?
- When the pregnancy test is negative...again
- When your spouse says I want out.
- When you lose your job.
- When the cancer returns
- When you are not sure you can pay your mortgage, or rent
- What happens when you grad from college or grad school

It's one thing to say trust in the Lord and much hard thing to actually do it.

This morning we are going to look at Psalm 127 if you have your bible please turn there, or if you need one we would love to give you one. We have some free bibles to give you at our next steps area.

While you are making your way to the passage...

There are a few things to point out in this Psalm

- Psalm of Ascent
 - Israelites would sing these on their journey to the different festivals and feast as a declaration.
- There are no commands in this Psalm.
- It is a wisdom Psalm which means,
 - It is telling us who God is and
 - How God has setup the world
 - It is written to show us how things will play out in the end so we can live right in the present time.
- It was written by Solomon
 - He was the son of David
 - There are three things said about Solomon
 - He had a lot of wisdom, wealth, and pagan wives.
 - 1 King 4:29-30 says that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt and his reputation extended past the nation of Israel
 - You can know the truth of this psalm, be the wisest of people and still not get it
 - At the end of Solomon's life, Israel was divided, his family was a wreck, and his life was a wreck.
 - ~~Jesus said that wisdom is justified by deeds.~~
 - God gave Solomon this psalm, and he still did not understand the truth that God is revealing.
 - Through the life of Solomon we know, you can hear this Psalm and not obey

I hope this morning we learn more about what it means to trust the Lord and **the Lord helps us place our trust in Him.**

Please read along with me as we begin to study Psalm 127.

A Song of Ascent. Of Solomon

¹Unless the LORD builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.

Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.

²It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.

³Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,
the fruit of the womb a reward.

⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.

⁵ Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Body

I see two things being taught in this Psalm...

1. Trust the Lord to Protect you (V. 1)¹
2. Trust the Lord to Provide for you (Vs 2-5).

~~God is calling us to trust him with all we have.~~

¹ These points were first given by Nick Roark sermon at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Passing and Permanent.

1. Trust The Lord to Protect you (v. 1)

We have two images used to show us protection & security in verse one.

1. The first is a house...

- Let's talk about the context of the word house.
- ~~It is important to understand the use of the word house in this psalm context.~~
- First,
 - It means an actual house or dwelling (ex. The temple)
 - A place you and your family would live
 - Houses then and now are places of protection.
 - The weather and danger
- Second,
 - Was children/family
 - In Israel building your house was not just a matter of a physical dwelling but also building your family.
 - As a person's family grew, they were protected and had security in their community
 - And, the actual word used here for "house" is referring to the children of Israel.
 - This is the same language used in Ruth 4:11;
 - "May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel."
 - The word children and house are used interchangeably
 - And in Israel the most important thing for protection was a family
 - And The Lord is saying that unless He builds the house, it is built in vain.
 - We need to pause for a second to understand the word VAIN.

- When we read this earlier it should have been ringing in our ears.
 - It is used 3 times in the first 2 verses.
 - The word **vain** means...
 - EMPTY, WORTHLESS, FUTILE, POINTLESS
 - And, to build a house without the Lord is vain.
- The other image to communicate protection and Security is...
- 2. **The Watchman who is given the task of protecting Jerusalem or another city.**
 - The picture given is that while the city sleeps the watchman is awake protecting the city.
 - Human history is full of protected cities
 - Think of our Capital City – D.C.
 - This country has gone to great lengths to protect itself.
 - Think of the agencies we have in this country setup to protect us.
 - What about us here today.
 - No one in here today is concerned about your safety
 - Well until we start packing up this equipment
 - Watch your fingers and toes.
 - ~~Today we have the same type of system in this country~~
 - I am grateful we have these systems and agencies, but they are not where we should place our Trust.
- Psalm 127 tells us, without the Lord, all of those efforts are **VAIN** – worthless.
- ~~This passage is telling us that to place our ultimate trust in the watchman is not secure — its vanity.~~
- To build a house or work tirelessly for security that is not from the Lord is empty and pointless.
- The only place we can find true protection and security is in the Lord

ILLUSTRATION

Think of it like this.

- You decided to build a house,
- You hire a contractor, get all the tools, wood, nails, and screws, but
- When the contract gets there, you decide “I got this”
- Only about 2 hours in you realize everything you are trying to do is pointless
- Or you never install the security system you spent hundreds or thousands of dollars on.

This is how we treat the Lord.

We know He is there, but we push him to the side.

We either choose not to trust Him or we don't know how.

- If you are in here today and you are **not** a Christian this has to sound a bit unusual.
- To trust God over myself doesn't make sense
- But, if you are honest you know your life is not as secure as you say it is.
- If you are really honest – you don't have that fundamental sense of security that I am talking about.
- **The whispers of the Ups & Downs of life are in the back of your mind.**
- Know, I am not trying to cause doubts and anxiety,
- What I'm hoping you hear is, there is a way for security and that is in the Lord.
- Through Jesus Christ!!!!
- You know your life is not as secure as you want it to be.
- You know success might not be in your hands and the path of self-reliance is a dead end and called vanity.

- God has news, and it is good news, He wants to destroy your self-reliance so you will trust him.
- 1 Pt. 1:5 **“You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”**
- Put your Trust in the Lord
- Who are you trusting to provide and protect?
- If it is not Jesus....
- I hope you can place your Trust in The Lord Jesus, today.

Verse 1 is all about what God is doing for His Children; verses 2-5 are all about what God gives.

2. Trust the Lord to Provide for you. (v. 2-5)

a. God provides the gift of rest (or sleep) (v. 2)

i. I really expected an amen right there.

b. God provides the gift of Children (v. 3-5).

²It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.

We see the third use of the word **vain** in this verse.

It is vain that we do not rest and eat **The Bread of Anxious toil**

- This is a direct reference to Gen 3:17
 - And he said to the man, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘Do not eat from it’: The ground is cursed because of you.[†] You will eat from it by means of **painful labor**[‡] all the days of your life.
- The phrase **painful Labor** is the same word as **anxious toil**
- And Solomon is echoing what God set forth because of sin
- This is a reference to the difficult effort require to provide – to put food on the table.

- We all feel the responsibility to provide for ourselves and/or a family.
- Doesn't matter what your job is...a high-level executive to a stay at home parent...you are working to provide.
- This work is not easy for anyone, which is why we all worry.
- We worry about...
 - The performance reviews
 - Performing well in our new position
 - Company buyouts that may affect your job
 - You ask the question, "Will I close this deal?"
 - My car is dead! How will I make it to work?
 - Will my kid hit her milestones like the other kids?
- I could continue this list for hours and still not make a dent in the worries we think about daily.
- The beauty of this passage is...

• **The daily bread we are working so hard for, is not DECISIVELY on you or me!**

- **In Matt 6:11 Jesus teaches us to pray saying,**
 - "give us this day our daily bread"
- **Manna in Ex 16:4**
 - When Israeli was fleeing Egypt in the desert with no food.
 - Then the Lord said to Moses, "**I am going to rain bread from heaven for you.** ~~The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This way I will test them to see whether or not they will follow my instructions.~~"

- Israel was so dumbfounded and had no clue what to call the stuff falling from the sky so they called it manna, which means "what is it?"
- And in this passage, we learn why it is **vain** or worthless for us to worry about providing.
- God Loves to give good things to his Children and in this verse God
- **Gives to his beloved sleep!**
 - ~~Really thought I would get an AMEN right there.~~
- A little context regarding this passage. In some of your bibles you may have a different wording at the end of verse 2 or maybe it's in the footnote and it reads
- **The Lord gives to his beloved "even in their sleep" or "while they sleep"**
- This is a big deal for us church.
- Think about it like this.

ILLUSTRATION

- In Mark 4:26-29 Jesus describes the kingdom of God through the analogy of a man planting a seed and seeing the seed grow.
- If you have experience planting anything you know it's really not up to us if it grows.
- We plant the seed, give it some water, then watch it do what it was made to do...grow.
- Even when we are sleeping, the seed is growing.
- **Stress the Point:**
 - to work on your own without The Lord is vain because he can give more while you are sleeping than by working around the clock.

- If the bible is not enough to convince you, listen to what a Professor at Harvard (~~the Crimson of the north...Roll Tide~~) has to say about sleep.

In the Harvard Business review an article called “Sleep Deficit: The Performance Killer” by Dr. Charles Czeisler (SIZE – LER) “likens sleep deficit to drinking too much alcohol, explaining that pulling an all-nighter (i.e., going twenty-four hours without sleep) or having a week sleeping just four or five hours a night actually ‘induces an impairment equivalent to a blood alcohol level of 0.1%.’”²

At that level of impairment, you are considered drunk.

The Blood alcohol level for drunk driving is .08%.

We would all agree getting drunk is a bad idea! So why do we think it is a good idea to stay away to be more productive.

News flash...Its not!

This Harvard professor is telling us the same thing God has been saying from the beginning.... We are not God!

Trust me and Get some rest!

God wants us to lay down each night (it’s kind of like a daily Sabbath) just to remind us that we are not God. Psalm 121:4 says God never sleeps or get tired. So, when we lie down to sleep we say,

“God, I am turning myself off, even though there is a ton to do... and lots to worry about... but you are staying on and you designed me to turn off, so I can trust you to handle what I can’t.”³

I know this is a hard concept for some of you. You are thinking

- It is not vain to put in a hard day’s work.
- “Why is it vain?”
- Aren’t we suppose to work hard? - yes you are.

~~I want us to take note here.~~

- God is not excusing Christians from work
- **In 1 Cor 15:10 it says,** “But by the grace of God I (Paul) am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, **yet not I**, but the **grace of God** that was with me.”
- We should work hard whatever your job may be.
- And to work hard is honoring to The Lord
- But working on our own efforts is dangerous.

- Four dangers in working through our own efforts ~~in building, protecting and providing.~~⁴

1. If God isn’t with you...you may never finish.

- a. Tower of Babel
- b. Task never feel done
- c. Hamster wheel.

2. The building collapses

- a. We can work as hard as possible for the next promotion only to see it go to a co-worker
- b. You can create the best possible schedule for your kids, only to see it fail immediately.
- c. Working without God will always lead to a collapse

² McKeow, Greg, *Essentialism*, pg. 97- 98; ([Harv Bus Rev](#). 2006 Oct;84(10):53-9, 148.)

³ Notes taken from J.D. Greear’s research on Psalm 127.

⁴ From John Piper’s sermon “Don’t Eat the Bread of Anxious Toil”

3. You never see the work finished

- a. Everyone in this room is planning, dreaming and casting vision for the future.
- b. We should do these things and they are helpful when reaching people for Christ.... you have to have a plan!!!!
- c. Yet, without the work of the Lord you will never see it finished.
- d. Without the Lord working, there will be no joy in our plans.

4. Our houses become a place of Tragedy.

- a. How often, too often, do we hear of the failure of a pastor.
- b. Or a CEO who is headed to jail b/c of fraud.
- c. I recently watched a documentary about a company who lied on an emissions test, which cost the company millions and the CEO is now in jail.
- d. ~~Living together to test your "future spouse?"~~

Is your job an idol? Are you continually worrying about your next relationship or your current one? Or are you resting on God's promise to provide.

One pastor said...

"Jobs are wonderful servants and terrible masters."⁵

I ask, is your life right now marked by fruitful rest?

Are you working hard by your own effort, in vain?

⁵ Roark.

We need to work hard but the **decisive** factor for providing is not on us.

Verse two instructs us to trust The Lord to provide rest and

Verse 3-5 is an actual example that highlights our dependence on God to give.

In these verses...

a. God provides the gift of Children.

³Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.

⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.

⁵Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Children are a gift. We have a part to play in the process, but it is a gift from God.

This passage tells us Children are a...

- Heritage and a...
- Reward
 - Result not of your effort alone but on God's kindness
- And Arrows
 - As you age and need care, they are there to protect and provide for you.
 - They are future disciples

I want to make something clear about this passage.

1. God is **NOT** rewarding people with Children based on deeds done or not done. ~~When he told Adam and Noah in Genesis to multiply, he meant have children.~~
2. But, children are a reward, meaning, **they are not a burden.** No matter how big or small or how long they live; children are not a burden.
 - a. How often are we guilty of seeing our children as a burden, when God has told they are a reward to us?
 - b. I know so many families who would trade places in a second.
 - c. Parents stop looking at your children as a chore – they are a GIFT!
3. They are arrows waiting to be launched into the world as disciple-makers. Eph. 6 teaches us to disciple our children to love Jesus and His Church
 - a. Sports are great – I played football, got a scholarship. But that was not my main purpose in life.
 - b. Academics
 - i. Please help your kids be as smart as they can be, but don't burden them with stress.
 - c. Milestones
 - i. It's okay if your son/daughter is on a different timeline
 - d. And parents, STOP Living vicariously through our children.
 - e. These things are good, but they are not God**
 - f. Your goal as a parent is to point your kids to Christ and his church.
 - g. This is what we do **in Image Kids** every Sunday.
 - h. We are partnering with you to help raise the next generation for Christ!
4. ~~It is a blessing to see the children of God grow; both through salvation and through childbirth.~~

Some of you listening, your hope is to be a parent and for some reason you find yourself without a child.

- Why doesn't God bless me?
- Why does He withhold this gift from me?

My wife and I have been in your position and we have asked those questions.

Example: Losing our first child and no guarantee of future pregnancies.

- In 2015, after a year of negative pregnancy test....(keep it short and to the point)

So, all week I have wrestled with these questions of WHY.

And to be honest...I don't know why; the passage does not tell us.

But we can take comfort knowing God only does what is good and right for His children.

You can look at this Psalm and know God loves you, and you can trust Him.

~~There is a hymn I use to sing growing up "Great is thy faithfulness" that rings true and its says~~

~~"All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, great is thy faithfulness, Lord into me!"⁶~~

So, I don't know why, but I know that if you never have a child you are a child of God.

⁶ Chisholm, Thomas, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/19>

And, I know that we have been given the gift of salvation – the final rest – through Jesus.

You are not alone; you do not have to go alone through this.

Part of Trusting in the Lord is trusting the things He has put in place to help us. And one of those things is the Church

Jesus gives us His church and He promised to build His church.

VAMP STARTS

J.C. Ryle said this about the church

Great is the **wisdom** with which the Lord Jesus Christ builds His Church! All is done at the right time, and in the right way. Each stone in its turn is put in its right place. Sometimes He chooses great stones, and sometimes He chooses small stones. Sometimes the work goes on fast, and sometimes it goes on slowly. Man is frequently impatient, and thinks that nothing is happening. But man's time is not God's time. A thousand years in His sight, are but as a single day. The great Builder makes no mistakes. He knows what He is doing. He sees the end from the beginning. He works by a perfect, unalterable and certain plan. The mightiest conceptions of architects, like Michelangelo and Wren, are mere trifling and child's play — in comparison with Christ's wise counsels respecting His Church. — J.C. Ryle.⁷

Conclusion

We can trust God to protect and provide b/c he has provide the ultimate once and for all sacrifice – Jesus.

And we can put our trust in Him b/c he tells he will never leave us.

⁷ Ryle, J.C., <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/holiness14.htm>

- When you are struggling to make ends meet – Put your trust in Jesus
- When you have been trying to have kids for years – Put your trust in Jesus
- ~~When you are at your breaking point – Trust God~~
- When you just lost you job – Put your trust in Jesus

If you can trust God with your salvation; you can trust in him to provide anything you need.

*****Trusting in God is trusting in the finished work of Jesus and the future hope of being with Jesus for all eternity*****

~~Trusting the Lord~~ It's not a magical formula, sometimes it's just simply showing up with all of your dependence on God: weekend worship, serving team, reading your bible, prayer. Sometimes all we can do is wait on the Lord with our continual trust in Him.

Timothy Keller says waiting/trusting on/in the Lord is a life of **“unconditional obedience and prevailing prayer...rather than jumping the gun the gun by taking matters into your own hands”**⁸ trust and wait on the Lord.

~~This passage shows us that God has always been pursuing His people. He is has always making a way for redemption.~~

~~From generation to generation we are able to trust The Lord.~~

⁸ Keller, Tim, *“The Songs of Jesus,”* pg. 46.

Solomon was trusting in the promise God made to his father David; we now are able to place our trust in the promised offspring – Jesus.

Jesus lived the life you cannot live. He died the death you should have died. And He overcame death so you and I can live in the promised rest he gives to his children.

In a moment, we are going to take communion together. This is a beautiful symbol of what Jesus has done for us. But some of you cannot take part b/c you have never trusted in Jesus – ~~what this represents.~~

See, you don't need the bread and the cup; you need what they represent, which is Jesus.

I want us to take a few moments today to rest in the finished work of Christ. So, the band is going to play, and I just want us to sit and rest in the promise of Jesus.

If you have never placed your trust in Jesus, now is the time.

Again, there is not magic formula; Jesus simply asks that we surrender to him.

If you are not sure what to say you can say something like this.

1. **Jesus, There is nothing I have done that could make you love me less, and nothing I could do that would make you love me more.**
2. **You are all I need for everlasting joy and I surrender my life to you; please be my Lord and Savior.**
3. **Forgive me of my sins and make me a new person in You. ~~As you have been to me, so I will be to others.~~**

~~4. As I pray, I'll do so according to the compassion you've shown at the cross and the power you demonstrated through the resurrection.⁹~~

The band is going to play you just take the next few moments to sit with The Lord and tell him you trust Him.

~~Let me pray for us.~~

⁹ Greear, J.D., "The Gospel Prayer," <https://jdgrear.com/blog/the-gospel-prayer/>

Bullpen

Examples

Rest and children

We are not told to do anything and this is a wisdom Psalm. This Psalm is also from Solomon who was known as the wisest of men (1 King 4 so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt). As I have been studying this Scripture, there seem to be two different themes being taught in this scripture (Trust God/Don't be anxious and Raise godly children); however, I want us to see these two themes not as exclusive themes but as one larger message

Mark Buchanan "The Rest of God": *"Like a parent who coaxes a cranky toddler to lie down for an afternoon nap by lying down beside her, God woos us into rest by resting...God commands that we imitate him in order to discover again that we're not him, and that we need him. Sabbath is a return to Eden?"*

Looking out at you right now, I can see several of you that are really close to God now.

God intended sleep to be a time every day where you remind yourself you're not God.

I've told you about my desires to not sleep... Furthermore, I had trouble sleeping always being worried about something. But here's the thing. God wants me to lay down each night (it's kind of like a daily Sabbath) just to remind myself that I'm not God. God never sleeps or get tired. So, when I lie down to sleep I say, *"God, I am turning myself off, even though there is a ton to do... and lots to worry about... but you are staying on and you designed me to turn off, so I can trust you to handle what I can't."*

It is not your responsibility to guard the city or build the house or pay the bills; that's God's job. It's your job to be faithful, and after you've been faithful you can lie down to sleep and leave it in His hand.

God designed you so that you needed sleep, and Sabbath, so you could remind yourself daily and weekly that YOU ARE NOT GOD.

Again, until you get this principle, vacations won't work for you. Even when you're on vacation you'll be worried about what you are NOT getting done, the money you are not making!

You might be unplugging from the activity, but you are not unplugging from the STRAIN.

