

Summer In The Psalms - Psalm 27

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I. GOD'S ASSESSMENT OF DAVID

A. Before we look at the Psalm in question, I want us to consider God's opinion about the one who wrote the Psalm—David. There are two amazing passages of Scripture that reveal God's assessment of David.

B. After God tells Samuel to go to Jesse's family to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the new king over Israel in place of Saul, Samuel sees Jesse's tall and handsome firstborn son and assumes that Eliab must be the one God has chosen.

C. 1Sa 16:7 (NIV) But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

D. This passage tells us that David was anointed king not based on anything external, but rather because God looked inside David's heart and liked what he saw. He wasn't looking for the strongest, the richest, the most talented, the most famous, or the most successful. Those things did not play into God's decision at all.

E. We get even more clarity on this subject from Acts 13:22—when Paul is preaching in Antioch and quotes what God had said in 1 Samuel 13:14.

F. Act 13:22 (NIV) After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: "I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart..."

G. Combined together, these two passages tell us that, when God was looking for the next king of His chosen people, He looked inside David's heart and liked what He saw—and what He saw made it clear

that David was a man after God's own heart. But the question is, when God looked inside of David's heart, what is it exactly that He saw that convinced Him that David was after God's heart? In other words, when God dove into the very core of what made David tick on the inside, what did He find there? The answer to that question is found in the Psalm we are looking at today.

II. ONE THING

A. Psa 27:4 (NASB) One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall 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 meditate in His temple.

B. Though many people are very familiar with this verse—One thing I desire of the Lord—I find that few are familiar with the context of the verse, which is found by reading the surrounding verses.

C. Psa 27:2-5 (NIV) When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. [3] Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. [4] One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. [5] For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.

D. Enemy armies are pressing in and have David surrounded. His generals come to him and ask, "What are we going to do?" David replies, "I know what I'm going to do, I am going to get in the Lord's presence and gaze on His beauty!" When his generals respond, "You don't understand. This isn't just about us, it's about our wives and our children, our friends and our families," David replies, "No, you don't understand...this is the only place of real safety!"

E. We can't get the full importance of this verse unless we understand who it is that wrote it. None of us have ever encountered a person like David. He was not just remarkable in a few areas of life, he was unmatched in wealth, musical talent, military strategy, hand-to-hand combat, political leadership, and even physical attractiveness.

F. This is the person who says that there is only one thing that he has desired and will continue to seek out! If anyone knows what is and what isn't worth desiring and pursuing, it's David! He's tasted and tried everything that the world defines as success. He has lived the American dream to the highest level and come to a conclusion about what really matters. What is really worth his time and attention? It's one thing, which breaks down to three things:

1. To dwell in God's house all the days of his life

- First and foremost, David sets his heart to get into God's presence every single day. Many people like to quote Psalm 27 and ascribe it to themselves, but how many actually live it out every single day?
- If you want to be a man or woman after God's own heart like David was, then getting alone with God has to make it onto your schedule. A priority is not a priority unless it makes it on your calendar!

2. To gaze on God's beauty (all the days of his life)

- Notice what David wants to do with his time once he gets into God's presence. It's not about giving God a list of prayer requests; it's about gazing intently upon God to behold His beauty. His time with God is mostly about God!
- David realized something about himself that many people miss about themselves—we all have a longing deep inside that can only be fulfilled by God! Psa 27:8 (NIV) My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.
- We were created with a longing to behold beauty. Each of us has within us a deep desire to see that which takes our breath away. All of us have had that experience of beholding something that was so beautiful that we wished the sight would never end—a brilliantly- colored sunrise or sunset, a cascading waterfall, a double rainbow, or a breathtaking snow-capped mountain range. The reason this experience is common to all of us is that we were created for it! The beauty that we are longing for is ultimately only found in God.
- Realizing that this is what he was created for, David made

up his mind that he was going to live his entire life fascinated by God! Too many Christians don't even realize that this is an option—you can live your life completely captivated and enthralled by God!

- The truth is this. If my relationship with God is boring, it is not because God is boring! He is infinite; He knows all things; He can do all things; and He is the source of all beauty! He is completely fascinating—and it's up to us as to whether or not we are going to choose our lives fascinated by Him.
- Many come into His presence every single day of their lives, but never take a single moment to gaze on His beauty. They walk in, read their list of requests, and leave. You can choose to live your life that way, but you will be missing out on so much! You will be missing out on what you were created for!
- Practically speaking, what does it mean to gaze on God's beauty? It means to fix your attention on the attributes and ways of God, like you would fix your gaze on the facets of a perfectly cut, flawless diamond. You might choose to look at His faithfulness or His humility or His omniscience or His omnipotence or His self-existence or His eternity or His justice or His infinitude or His perfection or any of His other attributes.

3. To meditate in God's Temple (all the days of his life)

- This is an invitation to linger in contemplation of the beauty that you discover as you gaze upon God's attributes. Implicit in this idea is the fact that it takes time. To meditate upon something, you must sit with the concept and chew on it and digest it and absorb it until the experience of it becomes part of who you are—and that takes time!
- One notable thing about this verse is that all of the major translations choose to translate the last word of the verse as "temple" even though the Temple did not exist in David's lifetime. David could easily have used the word "tabernacle" if he had meant that he desired to meditate in the Tabernacle of David, but he didn't. I believe David

meant that, though he started out in the Tabernacle before the Ark of God's Presence, he ended up in the Temple in Heaven before the very Throne of God!

G. If you want to be a man or woman after God's own heart, but you are not currently taking time daily to get in God's presence to gaze on His beauty and meditate on His attributes, then let's get really practical.

1. I would encourage you this week to spend time asking the Lord, "What needs to change in my life for me to actually consistently get alone with You and spend time beholding You and meditating upon you?"
2. What things have you been subconsciously prioritizing over spending time meditating on God's beauty—social media, a TV news channel or online news feed, Netflix, your favorite sport, a personal hobby...?
3. The most important step in successfully taking daily time in the Lord's presence meditating on His beauty is to get it on your daily schedule. Pick the time that is likely to work best for you and put it on your schedule!
4. Once I get alone with the Lord, I like to ask Him, "Show me something about Yourself that will completely fascinate me and cause me to love you even more today than I did yesterday." When He reveals something to me, I then spend time meditating upon it.
5. Another helpful tip is to ask the Lord before you begin to read the Bible each day, "Show me something about Yourself in the Word that I can meditate on today that will captivate my heart."
6. There doesn't have to be a brand-new topic every day to meditate on. For instance, you could spend an entire week meditating daily on the faithfulness of God, and each day could result in a new revelation related to His faithfulness. He is infinitely faithful, so you will never be able to exhaust that subject!

H. One danger we encounter in studying Scripture is that we can miss

the forest for the trees. We can get so locked in on figuring out what the details mean that we end up missing the big picture. And that is something that can definitely happen with Psalm 27:4.

1. To avoid that, let's think of it this way. Imagine that you overhear a husband say this about his wife: "The only thing I really want to do is be with her so that I can see over and over again how beautiful she is, and all I want to do all the time is think about how awesome she is!"
 2. What would you think was true about that husband? That he was totally, completely, madly in love with his wife! That is what's going on with David—he is totally, completely, madly in love with God!
 3. We can therefore see why God likes what He sees when He looks into David's heart, because the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength—and David was doing exactly that!
- I. So this was the defining desire of David's life that made him a man after God's own heart. But let's not forget about the context of the verse. David is highlighting that this lifelong desire does not change when his enemies surround him, but instead it steadies him in those moments!

III. THE STRONGHOLD OF HIS LIFE

A. Psa 27:1 (NIV) Of David. 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?

1. Here David addresses a topic that is extremely relevant today: fear. He says that, because God is his light, his salvation, and his stronghold, there is no one who he will fear or be afraid of.
2. Fear is the word that we use when the thing that is activating our fight or flight response is right in front of us, but there is another word that we use when the thing activating our fight or flight response is something that we are contemplating as being a part of our future, and that word is anxiety.

B. It's common knowledge that this generation is suffering from an epidemic of anxiety, and David gives us a prescription for dealing with it.

C. Throughout the Psalm, David makes it clear that he has plenty of reasons to be filled with anxiety—far more reason than most of us in this room today! Here are the very real challenges that David highlights:

1. Wicked men desire to devour him (verse 2): King Saul hurled a spear at David and sought to end his life.
2. An army is besieging him (verse 3): In addition to the numerous battles David fought with foreign armies, there was also an extended period of time when King Saul had sent an entire army of 3000 elite soldiers specifically to hunt David down.
3. His own sin entangles him (verses 7 & 9): David came to realize that the enemy that had the greatest chance of bringing him to ruin was not some domestic or foreign army, but rather his own fleshly desires. After committing adultery with Bathsheba and having her husband killed, David knew that his only hope of salvation was to fall on the mercy of God!
4. His family forsakes him (verse 10): When the greatest prophet in the land came to Bethlehem and told Jesse to gather all of his sons for a sacrifice to God together, David's parents didn't even invite him to come! But it was not only his father and mother who rejected him, later in his life, his wife would scorn him and his own son would completely rebel against him and try to take his throne by force.
5. False witnesses are slandering him (12): Doeg the Edomite convinced King Saul that David was out to get Saul.

D. What is David's prescription for living free from anxiety despite these overwhelming challenges? Get in God's presence, fix your eyes on how beautiful He is, and then spend your time meditating on His splendor!

E. As A.W. Tozer points out in the first chapter of *The Knowledge of the Holy*, "The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of

ten thousand temporal problems, for he sees at once that these have to do with matters which at the most cannot concern him for very long...”

F. The quickest way to turn what appear to be mountains of problems back into the molehills that they really are is to fix your gaze on the unlimited, all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-loving God of the Universe. There is no problem on earth that can seem large compared to Him!

G. After fixing his gaze upon God, David comes to the following conclusions about all his challenges:

1. It is only God who can truly give him victory over the wicked who want to devour him, over the armies that are besieging him, over his own sin that entangles him, and over the false witnesses who slander him.
2. He further realizes that, though his father, his mother, and his children might reject and abandon him, God will receive him!

H. One thing that is important to note is that, although this verse can be seen as a prescription for dealing with anxiety, that result is only a side effect, it is not the reason that made this his one desire. The desire had been there all of David’s life and he simply records freedom from fear as one of many positive effects in his life that resulted from it.

IV. CONFIDENT HIS ONE DESIRE WILL BE FULFILLED

A. David’s final, overarching conclusion after considering all that he has discussed in throughout the Psalm is this:

1. Psa 27:13-14 (NIV) I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. [14] Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.
2. When you compare various translations of verse 13, you will find something interesting. There are two different approaches that are taken in translating the Hebrew into English.
3. While all of the translations agree that the thing in view is “Seeing the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living,”

about half of the translations start with the idea of “I am firmly convinced of this...” while the other half start with the idea of “I would have lost heart if I had not believed this...”

4. The reason for this variation is because the Hebrew is difficult to translate into English without explanation. David uses an aposiopesis, which is a rhetorical figure of speech where a sentence is started, but is left unfinished, allowing the listener to fill in the blank.
5. An example of an aposiopesis would be to say, “I was in a dark alley surrounded by thugs with knives in their hands, and if the cops hadn’t showed up when they did...” It’s as if the speaker is saying, “It’s pretty much unimaginable what the results would have been, but I’ll let you fill in the blanks about how bad it would have been.”
6. So, in Psalm 27:13 David is saying, “Here’s the situation, I’ve faced armies coming against me, friends betraying me, family abandoning me, and powerful people attempting to completely destroy me, and unless I believed I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living...”
7. The thing that sustained David’s heart in the midst of seemingly insurmountable challenges was not a guarantee that every single situation would pan out exactly as he wanted it to—it was being absolutely certain that, no matter how bad his situation got, he could always get alone with God, gaze on His beauty, meditate upon his glory, and experience His goodness.
8. “Seeing the goodness of the Lord” is actually the answer to the prayer of verse 4—experiencing God’s nearness and beauty regardless of the circumstances, whether you are lying down in green pastures or being led through the valley of the shadow of death. His one desire fulfilled! This was success for David, whether or not his enemies stopped pursuing him, his family finally accepted him, his friends stopped betraying him, others stopped slandering him...just let me see God!!!
9. Some well-known commentators, like Augustine and Matthew Henry, see David’s reference to “the land of the living” as

pointing not only to this present life, but beyond it to the true land of the living in the eternal heavenly realm. When we fix our hope beyond this temporal life, we can be absolutely certain that we will see the goodness of the Lord there for the rest of eternity.

10. Based on this final conclusion, David then addresses his own soul: "In light of all of this, oh my soul, wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."
11. Rev 21:3-5 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. [4] He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' [5] He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"...