

“In Times Like These”**Psalm 27:1-14**

This past week I had a conversation with someone whose life has just been rocked. As we sat and talked, she told me that recently she had made a recommitment to follow God. Over the years circumstances had taken away her trust in God and felt she didn't need Him. From being molested as a child, being hurt by the church she had attended growing up and various other impactful events she had abandoned God in her own pursuit of happiness and fulfillment. So recently, with her own created world seeming to fall apart, she made the all-important decision that it was time to reconnect with God.

She said it hasn't been easy. Even in these brief weeks of recommitment, there have been situations that have shaken the fragile faith she is trying to build in trusting God. She injured her back and has been unable to work. A months long relationship with a guy ended that morning after a big fight, a guy who had recently gotten baptized. She wondered aloud to me why she seemed to attract toxic men in her life. Her mom has been quite ill and the list of negative things in her life spilled out like a dump truck unloading all its compacted trash.

She wants to trust God in it all and knows that the enemy is wanting her to question God's care during her hardship, but still it lingers. So we talked about how faith grows in trials not when everything is going well, how God is with us through all the challenges we face giving us the strength and grace we need to stand firm against our enemy.

And that is the conclusion I see that David comes to in **Psalm 27**. It's a passage that I needed for myself this week. It was a very difficult conversation with my brother and sister-in-law on Monday related to our dad's physical well-being. When you talk to him, everything is fine. He's doing great, but then they received a call from the visiting nurse telling them that it's not safe for him to be alone at all. He is on oxygen now, and when he exerts himself just getting up his oxygen level goes down into the 80's. She also told them that he is appropriate for hospice.

They are headed up today to have two very important conversations with him. One to talk about the need to be on hospice and the other to talk about the need to be relocated to an assisted living facility. As it is right now, we're having to come up with a temporary plan to ensure someone is there with him. It's not a long-term nor ideal sustainable plan. We all have family and work responsibilities.

This psalm has been helpful is remind me that my unseen enemy is bombarding me with negative thoughts, and I'll just leave it there. **Can I trust God in these current life challenges?**
Am I confident in God's promises?

If I were a betting man, I'd say you have had similar thoughts along your spiritual journey.

During devotions this past week, the Lord gave me a verse that has helped navigate through the thick web the enemy has laid out to ensnare me. Maybe you need it too. **Psalm 119:50 “My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.”**

And that is why this Psalm is so helpful and needful. It was written in a time of trouble. Some suggest it was written when David was helped by Ahimelech the priest. Running away from Saul, he stopped off to see if the priest had any supplies. He had the sword of Goliath and the holy bread of the presence. Doeg the Edomite was there at the same time and went back and told Saul where his enemy was who then went and slaughtered all the priests. On the run, David also moved his parents for their protection.

Another commentary believes it was the danger of attack from his son Absalom.

We may not know the occasion, but we do know that there were many times when David faced danger. And like David, the fact is that we also face any number of dangers both seen and unseen. The question must then be asked: **are we going to trust the Lord?** Notice in our opening verses that David has absolute trust in God in times of danger.

I. DAVID'S ABSOLUTE TRUST IN GOD IN TIMES OF DANGER – vv. 1-6

We noticed last week from **Psalm 26:1**, that David said he trusted the Lord without wavering. His trust was consistent and unchanging, resolute and without hesitation. In our Psalm today, David is expressing confident trust in God over the enemies that were threatening him. There are things we can learn from the shepherd/king.

When facing an enemy, we tend to consider what options are at our disposal. For an army, it may be first through negotiation – let’s talk about it and see if some kind of agreement might be reached before it escalates. If that fails, we consider what military action might be necessary – land, air, sea or a combination of all three. What kind of ground assault might be required? Will artillery be necessary? How many troops need to be deployed? Etc.

David gives us three ways he was standing against his enemy and they all center around the Lord. It is in his absolute trust that David has confidence in God.

A. David Has Confidence in God – vv. 1-3

The more we come to know God and who He is, the more trust we will have in Him. Having such a deep relationship with God, David asks a rhetorical question.

1. David’s rhetorical question – v. 1

Think about all the playground bullies you may have faced in school, all the opposition at work, in your neighborhood, or perhaps even in your family. Put them all up against the Lord and ask if there is anyone who can stand up against Him.

Romans 8:31 “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

It’s a conditional statement, isn’t it? If/then.

If God is for us

Then who can stand against us

If I pass my test, then I’ll be on the honor roll.

If I sleep in, then I’ll be late for work.

If I don’t water my plant, then it will die.

There is a hypothesis followed by a conclusion, or a situation followed by the result. In the case of what Paul says, if God is for us, the conclusion to the

hypothesis is that no one can stand against us. But notice at the end of the chapter the defense Paul gives to support the claim that no one can stand against us if God is for us.

Romans 8:35-39

All of **Romans 8** helps to answer the question posed in **verse 31**. God has adopted us (**v. 15**), given us His Spirit (**vv. 16-17, 26-27**), and saved us (**vv. 29-30**). Scripture provides convincing proof of Paul’s claim. **Psalm 118:6** says, “**The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?**”

II Kings 6:16: “**‘Don’t be afraid,’ the prophet [Elisha] answered. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’**”

Psalm 56:9: “**My enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me.**”

Hebrews 13:6: “**So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?’**”

And from our passage, **Psalm 27:1**: “**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?**”

The answer to the questions posed by David and Paul is obvious if we truly know God. There isn’t any power on this earth or in the spiritual realm that we cannot see that can overthrow Him. That doesn’t mean we won’t face opposition. But it does mean that if God is for us and with us, whatever the enemy may bring against us. If God is for us, there isn’t anything to worry about. And yes, there are times when we face hardship where we may question if God is really for us, like the gal I spoke with earlier this past week. In those troubles, we must absolutely trust the promise of **Romans 8:28** that all things DO work together for good to those WHO LOVE GOD and are called according to His purpose (emphasis added). Or to remember the admonition from **Proverbs 3:5-6** to trust explicitly in the Lord and not waver by thinking we might know better from our own understanding.

In his rhetorical question, David gives three reasons why we can trust the Lord without hesitation.

The Lord is our **light**.

The Lord is our **salvation**.

The Lord is our **stronghold**.

Light gives guidance and illuminates our path when it's dark. The psalmist says in **119:105** that God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. David repeatedly in the psalms refers to the direction he received from following God's Word.

Light is also used in Scripture to speak about deliverance. When Jesus says He is the light of the world, He is referring to deliverance given to those who have been walking in darkness of sin, but who are now set free through His salvation, which is the second characteristic of God mentioned. If Christ is our Savior, we may not be delivered from physical enemies, but we have been delivered or transferred from the kingdom of darkness to live in His kingdom.

Charles Spurgeon stated that **"salvation finds us in the dark but does not leave us there."**

As you know, a stronghold is a place of protection. When there was danger of an attack, those who lived outside the fortress, could enter for safety. Think of impenetrable stone walls. In addition to the fortress walls, many had an additional layer of protection in a tower that rose above the walls. **Proverbs 18:10** refers to God's name as a strong tower. Remember that a person's name refers to their nature.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

God provides unwavering protection for those who belong to Him. Again, to Paul's point in **Romans 8**, nothing can separate us from God.

Psalm 28:8 "The Lord gives His people strength."

Psalm 37:39 "The Lord rescues the godly; He is their fortress in times of trouble."

In the battles of life that we face never forget that God is a fortress to protect and defend. Spend time in His presence and be refreshed and strengthened. That cannot happen if we do not have Christ as our Savior. God then is our secure fortress. As one author

noted: **"When we say, 'the Lord is the strength of my life,' we mean God is our sure defense against every threat, fear, and enemy. The Lord safely guards those who call upon Him throughout all the days of their lives."**

He is our refuge in times of trouble (**Psalm 46:1**). I found that to be the case this past week and I hope the gal I talked with will find that to be the case as well. But here's something to keep in mind, that unless we relinquish control and place ourselves completely in God's hands, we will not be able to confidently say that the Lord is the strength of our life because we keep trying to help Him out.

We need to come to the place of the Apostle Paul who realized that God's grace gives us the strength we need to face our trials.

II Corinthians 12:9-10

Our strength doesn't come from us, it comes from the Lord knowing that **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."** (**Philippians 4:13**)

Isaiah 40:25-31

Isaiah records here the words of God to remind us that when we are weary from the battle, He never grows tired.

When we are weak, He increases our power and gives us strength.

He does it for those who wait on Him. We'll talk about this more at the end of the chapter, but to wait is another way of saying to trust.

Before David faced Goliath, we are told that he tried on the armor of Saul. He found it too weighty and cumbersome, unfit for him. He said he couldn't use them. He had said that when facing lions and bears it was the Lord who delivered him and gave him strength to face his enemies. He realized in facing Goliath that it was not in his own power that would bring down the giant.

I Samuel 17:45-47

Whatever giants we are facing, we can never defeat them in our own strength. We must go in the might of His God's Spirit and with the armor God has given.

Ephesians 6:10-13

Maybe David thought back to that day out on the hillside as a ruddy youth staring down not his enemy, but the enemy of God, standing not in his own power, but in the strength of the Lord.

Where is your confidence today?

Is it in the armor we have forged, thinking it will in some way protect us and deliver us or is it in the strength of the Lord?

Is God your light, your salvation, and your stronghold?

David found that to be the case for whatever he was facing as he placed absolute trust in God.

Why did have such confidence? Verse 2 gives us the answer. The Lord was his help in the past.

2. David remembers God's help in the past – v. 2

Do you ever think about the past? I can't say as I think all that much about events that have shaped me these 66 years, but they are good to reflect on because they can be a guide. On occasion there are times when I will think about some of the good things as well as some of the bad things. Playing sports in High school and college. Going fishing and hunting with my dad. Making chocolate no-bake cookies with mom or eating some of her home-made donuts. Throwing a rock and putting a dent in my dad's van. Totaling my car on the way to a hospital call. Making Robyn upset when I mowed over what she had already mowed.

When your mind starts going back in time and you muse over different things, what do you think about?

David thought about the past. Oh, he didn't dwell on it thinking he could undo any of it. He didn't dwell on the past remembering the glory years of when life was simple and carefree as he tended sheep outside Bethlehem. In many respects, he was a visionary and planned for the future, but he spent some time thinking about the past and what he thought about helped him stand strong in the present and prepare him for the future. **Verse 2** tells us he thought about the various enemies he faced in the past remembering how God was his light, salvation, and stronghold. He could face them without fear

knowing God was with him, after all, if God was for him, who could stand against him? He found that God was everything he needed to face his enemies serving as an example for us today by learning from him that God always has and always will be an ever-present help in time of trouble. As He has been in the past, so He will continue to be in the future.

Warren Wiersbe writes: "The Lord was everything he needed just as He is everything we need today. He is our light, so we need not fear darkness; He is our strength, so we need not fear because of our weakness; He is our salvation, so the victory is ours."

Wiersbe continues by stating that "the secret of David's public confidence was his private obedience: he took time to fellowship with the Lord and get direction from Him."

I will admit that when it comes to remembering God's help in the past, I tend to have amnesia. That's why I should write them down. Some of the psalms were reminders to the Israelites of how God delivered them from their enemies in the past like their deliverance from Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea or His provision and protection of them while they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years – feeding them with manna, shielding them by day in the pillar of smoke and at night through a pillar of fire. David remembering God's past deliverance from his enemies helped him with the enemies he was facing in the present. We should learn to do the same. I should journal them in the annals of Pastor Howie, so I don't forget those times when God was an ever-present help in time of my trouble.

Though sorrows befall us and Satan oppose,
God leads His dear children along.

Through grace we can conquer, defeat all our foes;
God leads His dear children along.

Some through the waters,
Some through the flood,
Some through the fire,
But all through the blood.
Some through great sorrow,
But God gives a song
In the night season and all the day long.

David remembered how God had helped him in the past and that helped bolster his confidence. And when David remembered God's help, he remembered what happened to his enemies who opposed him. The Lord brought judgment. They stumbled and fell. Instead of him being the one who was defeated, they fell into their own trap and were defeated.

Once again, from my devotions this past week, I was reminded that sometimes God brings swift judgment. At times, His judgment may be delayed. Sometimes we may think that God isn't doing anything to punish the wicked, but I was reminded that God's judgment will ultimately fall when they are punished for eternity as Paul reminds us that vengeance belongs to the Lord (**Romans 12:19**).

And lest we forget, let's remember that there is one enemy that thinks it has won, but has already been defeated by Christ.

I Corinthians 15:54-57 "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?" **The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God; He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

Paul then concludes in **verse 58** that because the victory is already won, we can stand firm, so that not even our enemies can move us. And that I believe is what David experienced as he thought about the past giving him the strength to stand in the present and something that would help in the future.

3. David knows God will help in the future – v. 3

God's unchanging nature means He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. It means that the promises of help you experienced in the past will be the same tomorrow for whatever enemies you face.

David had a settled peace and confidence in God as he trusted in Him. His heart would not fear.

One person translated it this way: "In spite of this I am trustful."

God leads His dear children along...

Because he knew the character of God, there was nothing for him to fear. He had absolute trust in time of danger. He had every reason to be confident in God. Why? Because we see in **verses 4-6** that David had communion with God.

B. David Has Communion With God – vv. 4-6

How focused are you? How resolute?

David had one thing on his mind. He had a singular longing for fellowship with God which caused him to seek after God. That was his ambition, his goal. He sought the Lord with his whole heart. Fellowship with God was his pursuit and his delight.

Let me ask you this?

Are you a Mary or a Martha?

You might wonder how that has anything to do with David seeking God. **Would you rather sit at the feet of Jesus and learn from Him in fellowship, or would you rather be out in the kitchen thinking that your serving is drawing you closer to the Lord?** Now, don't get me wrong, service is important because I believe that fellowship prompts service. There is a time to learn, but there is a time to act. But service means nothing if we are not in fellowship with the Lord. There was Mary wanting to soak up as much of the Lord as possible as she sat, listened and learned. But all the while Martha was in the kitchen stirring the stew she was stewing about how little her sister was doing to help with the dinner and she minced no words in telling Jesus what she thought about Mary. Jesus told her that Mary had chosen the better thing.

Every day David wanted to be close to the Lord.

Psalm 63:1 "O God, You are my God, earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water."

Psalm 42:1-2 "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"

Do you long after God? To know Him? To be in His presence every day? No wonder David is called a man after God's own heart.

Psalm 69:32 “The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.”

Proverbs 8:17 “I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me find Me.”

Deuteronomy 4:29 “But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find Him if you look for Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Why did David seek God’s presence all the time?

Because in the day of trouble, he knew God would hide him.

In medieval times, when someone fell out of favor with the king, they would run to the nearest church and there seek sanctuary or protection. This idea was rooted in the Old Testament and the cities that were set apart for a person to run to if they had committed involuntary manslaughter. They were under the protection of the city. David found protection in the presence of God.

Can we unequivocally say that our absolute trust in God leaves us confidently resting in Him?

David had absolute trust in God in times of danger. And notice in **verse 6** David’s response to the confidence he had in God. He was led to give praise through his sacrifice and singing.

Now it was my intent to go through all of **Psalm 27** today, but as I was preparing the message I realized that wasn’t going to happen. There’s a lot here that’s too important to skim over with a couple of brief comments. So we will pick it up here next Sunday where we will begin in **verse 7** and look at David’s anxious prayer to God in times of danger and conclude with David’s assuring confidence in God in times of danger.

Let me ask in closing: Do you have absolute trust in God? Are you confident in His person and do you have a passion to commune with Him?