

God My Light

Psalm 27

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news of His sinless life, efficacious death, expectant burial, and triumphant resurrection. This message and the light it contains overcomes the darkness of sin in this world as it is proclaimed, believed, and lived out. So we say with David, *“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”*

Summary of the Text

Because God is his light and salvation, David has no one to fear (v. 1a). Enemies have taken things from him, but God is the strength they cannot touch, so again he asks, *“Whom shall I fear?”*(v. 1b). His enemies came up to devour him, but they tripped and fell (v. 2). They could muster an army, but his heart will not fear nor will his confidence shake (v. 3). David’s ultimate goal is not safety but to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold His beauty and seek Him in His temple (v. 4). Nevertheless, he will find safety there, hidden in God’s secret place, set high upon a rock (v. 5). He offers sacrifices of joy and sings praises to the Lord because he has been lifted up above his enemies (v. 6). He cries out and calls on God to show mercy and answer him (v. 7). The Lord commanded him to seek His face. David obeyed and so calls on the Lord not to ignore or forsake him (vv. 8-9). Even if his father and mother leave him, the Lord will not (v. 10). David wants God to school him and lead him in a smooth path, delivered from his enemies who are false witnesses, who breathe out violence (vv. 11-12). Had he not trusted in God’s goodness, he would have fallen (v. 13). He concludes by exhorting us to wait on the Lord. Take courage and He will strengthen your heart. Wait on the Lord (v. 14).

False Witnesses

Jesus said that because the world hated Him first, so it would hate His disciples (Jn. 15:18-19). The apostle John tells us not to be surprised if the world hates us (1 Jn. 3:13). Fiery trials and the suffering that accompanies them is a necessary part of becoming like Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 4:12). For the first time in our country’s history we live in Negative World where being known as a Christian has a social cost and Christian morality is thought to be a threat to the public good. It’s a great blessing when the truth of the gospel is widely believed and brings virtue and peace to a culture, but even then there will always be false witnesses who exhale lies and breathe out violence (v. 12). David was in Israel when there was no shortage of violence and wickedness, and he was confident God’s truth would win (v. 3) and so should we. In 1776 Voltaire predicted that within 100 years the only Bibles remaining on the earth would be historical artifacts, and by 1836 his house was used as a warehouse for Bibles and gospel tracts, much of it printed there on his old presses. Don’t believe lies and threats of violence, and don’t be discouraged by hard truths.

The Beauty of the Lord

Christians who want peace at all costs are idolaters. David wants one thing and it compels him to action: *“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”* (v. 4). God is the center of our affections, our deepest desire, infinitely beautiful and majestic. This world contains all kinds of glimpses of His triune glory: *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse”* (Rom. 1:20). David experienced this beauty in the sanctuary of God and longed for it. He wasn’t trying to become a priest but centered his life on faithfully worshiping the Lord. Biblical Christians have been fairly consistent on proclaiming the truth, not your “truth” and my “truth” and truth is really relative (but this truth is somehow absolute?). We believe in true truth, as Francis Schaeffer put it, truth that exists whether you were ever born or believed it or not. But when it comes to beauty, Christians have been quick to say that is in the eye of beholder. This aesthetic relativism is pernicious and responsible for

God My Light

Psalm 27

countless ugly buildings, sentimental music, and poorly crafted art. Bauhaus architecture, for example, intentionally designed buildings to treat people like interchangeable, individualistic units, “living machines” who are sexually free to connect with whatever other machines they feel like. Aesthetic relativism is driven by an anti-human philosophy and agenda. When David beholds the beauty of the Lord in His sanctuary, would we say that this is just his way of connecting with God, and who is to say what beauty really is? No, God is objectively beautiful, and we should seek Him in worship and also reason by analogy from the beautiful things in creation to the infinite beauty of Father, Son, and Spirit. C.S. Lewis traces his earliest experience of joy, which he defines as a pained longing or unsatisfied desire, when as a young boy he saw his brother’s toy garden forest made in a cookie tin lid with moss, twigs, and flowers. He later came to know, to be surprised by, this joy as coming from the person of God Himself. We don’t chase emotional experiences in themselves, but we long to be in the presence of God who is both beautiful and terrifying. In times of trouble God hides us in the secret place of His tabernacle and sets us high upon a rock (v. 5). It’s beautiful, comforting, and a little scary at the same time because He is awesome in the old and true sense. We want to hunger after God’s beauty and have it drive our music, liturgy, dancing, homes, reading, writing, art, gardening, feasting, and fellowship. He is true, good, and altogether lovely.

God of Light

Consider the nature and power of light. When the light shines, the darkness has no choice but to disperse. If God is your light and salvation, what can possibly make you afraid? If He is for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)? If you have to be in control in order to be without fear, then there are never-ending sources of concern. Countless sources will capitalize on this fear to sell you stuff and control you (e.g. eggs, masks, vaccines). If you are with God, then you are in the majority. David looks at mounting armies just like he looked at Goliath, confident of nothing but victory (v. 3). This true humility is the opposite of pride but it sounds like pride to those who can’t imagine having God’s light. Some Christians think we have God but never see clearly. But the Lord is David’s salvation and his light. These go together because they are found in Him: “*And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it*” (Jn. 1:5). When you face the darkness, when you feel it pressing on you such that you can’t see your metaphorical hand in front of your face, ask God to be your light and light the place up. How does His gospel and greatness of His grace apply to this thing? Lord, open my eyes!

Wait on the Lord

Some psalms end in glorious resolution. Psalm 27 finishes in a glorious exhortation: “*Wait, I say, on the Lord!*” Historian Christopher Dawson said the church lives in the light of eternity and can afford to be patient. David isn’t predicting his parents will forsake him, but even if they did, the Lord will not (vv. 9-10). You need to tell yourself this. We have to strengthen our hearts and take courage because the temptation is to let them go limp and be cowardly. When life is hard do you turn to God and His word and His people, or do you go off on your own to doubt, blame, and despair? Even when you do this, He will not forsake you. But don’t. Be of good courage, strengthen your heart, and wait for Him.