

## Unity in Our Desire Psalm 27:1-14

Please take your Bibles this morning and turn with me to the 27<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Psalms. **Would you honor God's Word and stand if you can as I read this passage aloud?**

Our topic today is to see that the church must have unity in our desire. Unity invokes the idea that we are in pursuit of the same thing; that we have the same longing, the same passion. This passage guides us along a path that helps us pursue something to be passionate about.

After we are done with the message I hope you will have answered in your own mind whether or not we are all after the same goal, if our desire is the same or if we are pursuing other things that are of lesser importance. I hope it brings us squarely to ask and then answer what is our one overarching desire?

There is a lot of debate between scholars as to when this Psalm was written. Some believe that it was written when David was a young man being pursued by Saul who sought to take his life. The imagery that is used could support that idea. He talks about enemies pursuing him (but then when wasn't that the case) and he wonders if the Lord notices. He speaks of parents abandoning him suggesting that he may still be living at home. He describes a very strong devotion to the Lord, a faith that was seen in his early years.

Others suggest that it was written when he was much older, reflecting back on years of commitment following the Lord through the various enemies that he faced as King. He talks about the Temple, but we know that the temple wasn't built until after his death.

I'm not going to speculate about when; I'm more concerned about what he writes and why. Notice importantly how David begins this particular Psalm.

**Vs. 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?"**

They are rhetorical questions asked by someone who has come to know with confidence that the Lord is an ever present help in time of trouble. We could rewrite them to say that since the Lord is my light and salvation and strength, I'm not afraid of anyone else. God's presence is a source of security for him against any foe.

David came to understand, believe and live by the reality that God is not some obscure or absent deity. We will see in this passage as we do throughout the Psalms that David recalls the many difficulties that he experienced at the hands of his enemies, he expressed various emotions that he felt when he was surrounded and assaulted by multiple enemies, yet he came up with the same conclusion in them all though stated differently from how it appears here – **"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?"**

At the end of the day no matter how difficult the circumstance or how big the foe, there is nothing to fear when I acknowledge God is my light, my salvation and my strength. It's a theme that courses its way throughout Scripture. God is the same for us, yet how often we look to our own resources instead of to the Lord. There are times, and this Psalm is one of them, when we follow God but seem to end up wondering if God is around. God, we say, the enemy is pressing in, now would be a good time to help. If we are like David, the conclusion will be the same – with confidence we can rest assured that He is our light, salvation and strength.

Too often though we attempt to get through in our strength and we then call on God to get us out of the mess we got ourselves into. That happened to Israel more than once. Isaiah tells of a particular incident

you are familiar with. The Assyrians had conquered Israel. God allowed it because of their many sins and unrepentant heart. They were in captivity and had been for some time. They began to wonder if God knew about their plight and if He knew did He even care. We pick up the story in Isaiah 40.

Isaiah has just described the power of God. He is the One who measures the amount of water on the earth in the hollow of His hand. He is the One who measures the expanse of the universe and weighs the mountains on His scales. He is the One who has named all the starry hosts of heaven. No one gave Him counsel in the creation of the heavens. No one taught Him justice or shared with Him wisdom. Is there anyone that we can compare God to, Isaiah asks? Yet Israel had the audacity to complain to God, even challenge His motives for allowing their current plight, and even question if He had forgotten all about them. Here is God's response through the pen of Isaiah:

**Vs. 27 “Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God’? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth....”**

Throughout their generations they had been taught and had witnessed the might and glory of God. He had miraculously delivered them from Egypt after 400 years of bondage. He miraculously divided the Red Sea for them to walk across to avoid the approaching army. He miraculously fed them with manna every day for 40 years. He miraculously parted the Jordan River so they could enter the Promised Land. He miraculously caused the walls of a well-fortified city to collapse after they marched around it. Through their history they knew the mighty hand of God was able to provide or deliver. They could read about God's deliverance and even

recount stories about God's deliverance, but they had willfully ignored those truths.

They abandoned following God and expected that God would keep His end of the covenant. He had told them that if they followed Him and obeyed His law even their enemies would be at peace with them. They didn't and so God elected to bring judgment through the Assyrian captivity. They thought God had effectually abandoned them, yet Isaiah is very clear to remind them that their plight had not been lost to the Almighty. God was not in some way blinded to their circumstances. He not only was aware, He was also quite capable of delivering them. They weren't sure they could trust God. They didn't have confidence in Him.

At whatever time David wrote this Psalm it is very clear that he had come to the conclusion that he could confidently rely on God. The passage begins and ends with confidence. Confidence means to rely on, to be persuaded about something, to feel safe even when trouble surrounds us. It also means to have trust or faith in. The word here is the same word that shows up in **Proverbs 3:5 “TRUST in the Lord with all your heart...”** **Can we really say we have confidence in someone if we don't completely trust him or her?** David was saying in this Psalm that he had complete confidence in God. Maybe it was his example that inspired his son Solomon to pen the words at the direction of the Holy Spirit that when we trust in the Lord with all our heart and don't lean on our own understanding, but acknowledge Him in all our ways He will guide us down the right path.

It's what the author of Hebrews penned beginning the chapter on faith.

**“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1a)**

It is a faith that believes God exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him (11:6).

Notice too, how very personal this is to David:  
**The Lord is my light**

**The Lord is my salvation****The Lord is the stronghold of my life**

**With such confidence in Almighty God is it any wonder then that David's desire is for God?** It

doesn't matter the odds that are stacked up against him, it doesn't matter the number in the ranks of his enemies; standing with God is always a majority.

You may be facing giants today.

You may be facing a daunting enemy.

**Do you have the confidence in the same God as David? Can you attest with him that since God is my light and salvation who is there to fear?**

David saw God as his light, his salvation, his stronghold.

Light often symbolizes well-being or life. To say that the "Lord is my light" is to confess confidence in Him as the source of these benefits.

God is a light to show us the path that we should take. When the nation of Israel didn't know the way in the wilderness after their exile from Egypt, God became a pillar of fire to show the way.

When we don't know which way to take about decisions we face or about how to handle difficult situations or people God has said that His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. It becomes our guide especially in times of darkness, when times are disparaging. When we are tempted to fear, when we are tempted to doubt, allow God to be your light to lead you to safety, allow His light to bring you comfort when discouraged. Jesus said to His disciples that He was the light of the world.

God is our salvation and indeed there is salvation in no other. He is our deliverance.

God is our stronghold. He becomes our defense against the enemies we face.

In medieval times, castles became the best defense against attack. Engineers designed castles to withstand many assaults. They were anywhere

from 7-30 feet thick and up to 40 feet high with towers soaring up to 100 feet high. They were built in such a way as to minimize any blind spots where an enemy might lurk. Spaced strategically were holes in the walls and towers that archers could shoot through or from which hot oil or molten metal could be poured on attackers. Moats and drawbridges were part of the defenses employed against the enemy. Every possible means of defense were used in the development of these strongholds to keep the enemy out.

God is the stronghold of our life.

**Psalm 18:1-2, 32**

**Psalm 46:1**

**Who is our refuge and strength?** God is.

**What does our refuge and strength do?** He provides help.

**When does our refuge and strength provide help?**

He always provides it because He is always present.

**Why does our refuge and strength provide help?** He provides it because we are in trouble.

When David approached Goliath, it was in the confidence that God was his stronghold. When David ran from Saul, it wasn't in cowardice; it was in confidence that God would protect him. But when he ran from Absalom, he didn't have confidence in God because he wasn't seeking the Lord with all his heart. He was not the man who meditated on the Lord day and night, he was not the man whose heart was completely after God.

When you feel like the arrows of the enemy are getting through, ask whether or not you are dwelling in the Lord as your stronghold.

**What confidence did David have in God who was his light, his salvation, and his stronghold?** Notice **verses 2-3.**

David had complete confidence in God and why shouldn't he? Why shouldn't we? How much

confidence do you have in God? Our confidence or lack thereof is directly associated with how much we desire God.

But now we come to **verse 4** which is the heart and soul of this Psalm. I want to suggest that before we can desire Him we must first trust Him.

We see right away David's heart for God – **“one thing I desire.”**

I had a short conversation last weekend with Everett and Arlie's granddaughter Avery. She's at some university in Colorado studying I'm not sure what, but one thing I do know is this – she has one desire – the 2020 Olympics competing in the triathlon. As I was reaching for one of those sugar cookies with the thick orange frosting and colored sprinkles I jokingly asked if it was on her training diet. She laughed and said it wasn't. She said that everything she eats she has to email to her trainers so they can monitor her food and calorie intake. While she could eat it and no one would know, she knows that if she is to seek this one thing, the Olympic Games, she must discipline herself in what she eats and how much she eats as she continues to train.

I enjoyed my cookie!

There was only one thing on the mind and heart of David as he penned these words. That one thing was the sole pursuit of his heart. It wasn't a larger kingdom, although that happened. It wasn't to become well known, although that happened as well. I think he cringed and became embarrassed every time he heard people say “Saul has killed his thousands and David has killed his 10 thousands.” That wasn't him. He was after one thing, something that he would rather be known for. It was something he was so strongly desiring that He sought the Lord about it. **“That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.”**

We might read it to say “Lord, I'm asking you for one thing and for one thing only, it's what I desire above everything else. I want to dwell in Your house forever. I want to gaze on Your face. I want to seek You in Your temple.” Okay, that's three things, but it conveys one thought, seek the Lord.

**Psalm 24:3-4** gives us a clue as to how that is possible. **“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure hearts, who does not lift up his soul to an idol, or swear by what is false.”**

Hands refers to our actions.

The heart refers to our attitudes and motives.

So when we seek after the Lord and desire His presence we need to come having repented of wrong doing and we need to do what is right. And the great thing is when we seek God with all our heart, Scripture tells us that we will find Him. He is not aloof and He is not unknowable.

**I Chronicles 28:9**

**Psalm 63:1-6**

**Psalm 69:32**

**Jeremiah 29:11-14a**

David sought to know the Lord. Now let me mention here just as a way of reminder, the Temple hadn't been built yet. That would come under the supervision of his son, Solomon when he became king. God's Temple in David's day was just a tent. When he became king it was his desire to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. In **II Samuel 6** we have the account of David's attempt to bring the Ark to the capitol. He selected some men for the task and they went to retrieve the Ark, but along the way as the cart began to pitch a little and it appeared that the Ark might fall off the cart that was toting it, Uzzah put his hand on the Ark to steady it and God immediately zapped him dead. David became afraid of the Lord and feared bringing the Ark up to Jerusalem. For three months it remained at the home of Obed-Edom. One day David noticed how God had blessed that man, so he sought again

to bring the Ark up. This time David followed God's rules for how the Ark should be handled. It was then that God blessed David's desire.

Would you agree with me that David had the right motive in his first attempt, but went about it in the wrong way?

Would you agree with me that when we seek the Lord, we can have the right motive but go about it in the wrong way?

When we seek God it must be in the right way. We can say we're seeking God and attempt to do so through nature. Now we understand from **Romans 1:20** that "**God's eternal power and divine nature**" are seen in creation, but it is wrong to worship nature as God as the Pantheists do.

We can say we're seeking God through pleasure as the hedonists do, but that too is wrong. They look for God in the bottom of a bottle or in some affair or through social gatherings and an active lifestyle. There are so many ways people seek God through pleasure but they all take them down a wrong path. David found there was only one way to seek God.

**"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after..."**

In a little booklet written in 1975 by Walter Henrichsen titled *Many Aspire, Few Attain*, of the things that he writes about he begins with this very important point if we are to end the race of the Christian life well. He says we need to have a heart for God, a heart that comes from seeking God with our whole being. He continues by noting that David desired and sought after one thing. He did not dabble after a bunch of things.

I would like to play the guitar better, but I don't seek it, I dabble at it.

I would like to be a better mechanic to diagnose and perhaps even fix vehicle problems, but I won't because I dabble at it.

I would like to know more about the computer so I can debug my own problems, but I only dabble at it.

Are you a dabbler when it comes to seeking God? Am I a dabbler interested only in appeasing my own guilt by getting devotions out of the way by reading a chapter or two so I can get to the real business of the day for which I am more interested? Or do I get lost in His Word as I meditate on what I'm reading? You can tell that I haven't missed many meals and you can tell when I have. I become physically gaunt.

You should be able to tell that I haven't missed any spiritually meals. And while I may be able to fool you for a time, eventually you will notice that I have when I becoming spiritually malnourished.

Do we seek the Lord; do we desire Him? Do we have a real heart for the Lord? Isn't that the summation of the Law? **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength."**

My tendency is to seek Him but on my own terms. We're more like the man who said he wanted to follow Jesus, but had to go inspect some cows he had just purchased.

Henrichsen concludes that there are many Christians, but there are few godly people. A Christian dabbles at many things, a godly person seeks after one thing. It's his all-consuming desire.

It was said of A.W. Tozer that sometimes he would come to the dinner table and not say a word. It wasn't that he was mad at anyone or didn't have anything to say; he was so focused on God, he didn't want that focus to be broken as he sought God.

About Tozer James Snyder writes **"Tozer daily cultivated the ability to focus on God. He would quiet his heart, and out of that quietness would come adoration and worship for the triune Godhead."**



Our desire for God, our seeking God, our pursuit of God will lead to our worship of God.

That's what happened to David when the Ark was brought to Jerusalem. **II Samuel 6** says that when those carrying the Ark went six steps they paused and offered a sacrifice. And then as you continue on it says that **"David danced before the Lord with all his might...and they brought in the Ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, inside of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it; and David offered burn offerings and peace offerings before the Lord."**

And it is worship that we see that David longs for as he seeks God here in this Psalm. **"...that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in the temple."**

David longed for the Lord so much he desired to be in His service where he could minister daily and he wanted to do it forever. David wanted to meet with God regularly. He wasn't satisfied with a haphazard or halfhearted approach to knowing God. He wanted that one desire to consume His thoughts and actions.

### **Psalm 17:15**

We can apply that to us today and say that in his life David wanted to always live in the abiding presence of the Lord. It is the same thought that Jesus conveyed to His disciples when He told them to abide in Him. It is to live with the conscious awareness of God's presence with us at all times, to be captivated in such a way that as we dwell on Him we are led to worship, to desire more of His presence. An increased desire for God will lead to our worship of God.

And notice that it is in this place where God will hide the person who seeks Him.

**Verse 5 "For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the**

**shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock."**

In ancient Middle Eastern culture when a person came into the tent of another individual, that person was to guarantee their safety. We see this when the angels of God entered the house of Lot just before Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. At night the wicked men of the city came and wanted to commit indecent acts with them, but Lot refused stating that they had come under the protection of his roof.

David understood that by dwelling in the presence of God, especially when there was trouble all around him and against him, he would be under God's ongoing protection; that God would be his rock and refuge.

### *Hymn 693 A Shelter in the Time of Storm*

The Lord's our Rock; in Him we hide,  
A Shelter in the time of storm;  
Secure whatever ill betide,  
A Shelter in the time of storm  
O Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,  
A weary land, a weary land,  
O Jesus is a Rock in a weary land –  
A Shelter in the time of storm.

O Rock divine, O Refuge dear,  
A Shelter in the time of storm;  
Be Thou our Helper ever near,  
A Shelter in the time of storm.  
(Chorus)

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Notice that his worship continues in verse 6 with shouts of joy that become his sacrifice to God joy that expresses itself in songs to the Lord.

God had invited David to seek Him, and David responds by telling the Lord that it is His desire to seek the Lord. But keep this in mind as you look at verses 9-10, though God seems silent, He is never

absent. It seems inconceivable to fathom that our parents may abandon us, but if that was ever the case, God would take us in. How often do we see in Scripture that God will look out for the orphan? In the end David's desire is that God would teach him and lead him along the right path. That should be our prayer as well, loved ones, to only be satisfied with taking God's path. To trust Him explicitly with all our heart even when that path doesn't appear safe or we wonder why God might lead us there. When we seek Him, He will make our paths straight.

And then notice in conclusion that David ends with how he begins, in the confidence of the Lord. He reminds us that seeking God takes patience. It does not come quickly. We must have patience and wait, especially when we are assaulted and there seems to be no response from God and we want deliverance now. Continue to seek Him, wait on Him, hope in Him. As it does elsewhere, waiting means to hope or look with eager expectation. **Isaiah 40:31** reminds us that **“those who hope (wait-KJV) in the Lord will renew their strength.”**

**Psalm 14:2 “The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.”**

It was David's desire to seek the Lord. **Is that your desire, to seek the Lord? Are we seeking Him as a church?** When we seek after God with all our heart as our one desire, we will see a depth of unity in that desire that expresses itself in unharnessed worship. **What are you seeking after today?**