

Sermon Outline

“GOD THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH”: FINDING OUR CONTENTMENT AND HAPPINESS IN GOD

“ONE THING”: CULTIVATING THE GOD-LONGING HEART (PSALM 27:1-14)

I. How Great Is Our Desire?

II. A Psalm of Trust

- A. The book of Psalms is a book of prayers. Each Psalm is a prayer that can be used to speak to God.
—God gave us the Psalms to give us language we can use when we come to him.
- B. Psalm 27 helps troubled people to direct their trust to the Lord in times of trouble.
- C. In the process, it also instructs a person on how he or she should be “feeling” (if we could use such words) toward the Lord.

III. Audacious Faith (Psalm 27:1-3)

- A. The Psalm begins with the Psalmist preaching to himself about the Lord’s goodness: “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?” (v 1)
- B. The Psalmist is preaching the Gospel to himself. In the process, he’s giving us words to use when we are afraid.
- C. We should not be afraid, because of what the Lord has chosen to be for us.
 - 1. The Lord is our *light* in darkness.
 - 2. The Lord is our *salvation*.
 - 3. The Lord is our *stronghold*.
- D. Because the Lord is all these things to his people, we can be confident that those who seek to hurt us will themselves be overcome in the end.
— “When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall” (v 2).
- E. God’s children can display audacious courage and joy even in the face of evil.

— “Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident” (v 3).

F. A brief word on how the Gospel speaks to abusive relationships

IV. “One Thing Have I Asked of the Lord” (Psalm 27:4)

A. If the Lord is all this for us, how then should we see him? How should that change the way we view our priorities in life?

1. “One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: 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 inquire in his temple.”
2. If the LORD is the fortress of his people, what better place is there than to dwell where the LORD is?

B. The Psalmist expresses his longing for the LORD by saying that it is the “one thing” he has asked of the LORD.

1. In this case, “one thing” seems to be shorthand for “the one thing that is paramount.”
2. This is the absolute “one thing” that supersedes all other prayer requests.
3. Nothing is more important for us than being with the Lord, the only Good that never changes.

C. What constitutes this “one thing”?

1. It is...
 - a. to “dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...”
 - b. “to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD...”
 - c. “to inquire in his temple.”
2. In summary, the one thing is to be with the LORD forever.

V. To Dwell with the Lord Always

A. Desiring the LORD alone is longing to “dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...”

B. The house of the LORD that the Psalmist has in mind is the temple. In our time, the Lord’s house is his Church and the most of all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme House of the Lord, because, as Colossians 2:9 says, “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily [.]”
2. To ask to dwell in the house of the Lord is to ask to dwell/abide in Christ.

VI. To Gaze upon the Beauty of the Lord

- A. Desiring the LORD alone is a longing “to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD...”
- B. When we face trials, we long for beauty that refreshes us.
- C. We can find God’s gifts of beauty in creation. But we should follow the Psalmist’s lead and go to the One who started beauty, the One who is Beauty and Glory himself.
- D. The Scripture also gives us glimpses of God’s holy beauty. He is like...
 - a pillar of cloud and fire (Ex 13:21)
 - a fiery human-like Being enthroned on an heavenly chariot (Ezek 1:22-28)
 - a man with white hair, blazing eyes, shining skin, and white robes (Rev 1:13-16).

— The Lord reveals himself like that so that we get a sense of the holy Beauty that is before us, even if we do not see him with our own eyes.
- E. Thus, whenever we feel ourselves to be assaulted on all sides, call on the Lord—and believe that you are immediately in his beautiful and glorious presence.
- F. The Lord Jesus prayed that we would finally see the Beauty of the Lord.
 - John 17:24: “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

VII. To Inquire in His Temple

- A. Desiring the LORD alone is a longing “to inquire in his temple.” Longing for the Lord involves longing to hear his Word.
- B. In fact, the Beauty of the Lord is revealed in his Word (see Ps 19:7-10).
- C. The Lord is absolute Beauty/Glory. This Beauty/Glory flows out in his holy Word.
- D. When you come to the Word of God, you come to a visible manifestation of God’s Beauty/Glory.
- E. What makes God’s Word even more beautiful to us is the fact that we come to a *fulfilled* Word, a *completed* Law.
 - 1. Christ fulfilled the Word for us that we might be justified and accepted by God.
 - a. The curses of the Law have been absorbed by Christ.
 - b. The commandments of the Law have been fulfilled by Christ.
 - 2. This frees us now to delight in God’s Law for its own intrinsic beauty.

3. We seek the Word of God not to gain justification or escape condemnation (Christ has already accomplished those for us), but to dwell in the presence of our Lord and heavenly Father.
 4. Doing the Word of God is itself the experience of God's presence in our lives—an experience made possible only because we are joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, who obeyed this Scripture perfectly for us (cf. Phil 2:12-13).
- F. When the Psalmist seeks to inquire of the Lord, he's not merely seeking some theological information. He is driven by a deep sense of desperation to seek the Lord himself.
- G. Likewise, when we read Scripture, we must read it with the intention of drawing close to the Lord. What makes Scripture-reading an encounter with the Lord *for us* is the fact that we are seeking the Lord in it. Scripture-reading has to become a part of prayer.
—Before you can be a student of the Word, you must first be a pray-er of the Word.

VIII. Cultivating a God-satisfied Heart

- A. How do we grow more and more in our desire for *God* as the One Thing that is most important to us?
- B. The Psalmist provides the answer—and it has two parts.
- C. First: Return to who the Lord, the King of the universe, has chosen to be for you.
1. The promises again:
 - “The LORD is my light and my salvation...The LORD is the stronghold of my life...” (v 1)
 - “For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock” (v 5)
 2. We may fear that by treating the Lord like that, we're taking advantage of him.
 - a. But we are not presuming on the Lord when we take refuge in him. That is exactly what he calls you to do!
 - b. Idolatry is trusting in other gods or yourself to do what only the Lord can do (i.e., be our light, salvation, stronghold, etc.).
 3. When you seek the Lord as the supreme Good, you are honoring the Lord.
- D. Second: Ask the Lord to give you the desire for the “one thing.” Pray.

IX. The One Thing

Long for the LORD God above everything else. To long for the Lord is to seek to dwell with him, gaze upon his beauty, and inquire of him all the days of our lives. We can and should (!) do all of this because in Jesus Christ, the LORD has become our Light, our Salvation, our final Home. Longing for the Lord is about making our final home in him. In him, every moment is Sabbath. In him, every day is rest. In him, everywhere is peace. Will you trust him to be these things for you? Ask God for the grace to do so.

Questions for Further Reflection

1. Is there anything about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. What kind of book is the Psalms? How can a believer read and use the book of Psalms?
3. What kind of a Psalm is Psalm 27?
4. According to the Psalmist's words in v 1, why should the believer not be afraid?
5. If the Lord is the salvation of his people, what would be the fate of those who seek to overcome us? (v 2)
6. "One thing have I asked of the Lord" (v 4). How should we understand the phrase "one thing"? Does it mean "only one thing" or "one thing above all"?
7. What constitutes this "one thing"?
8. What does it mean to "dwell in the house of the LORD"?
9. What does it mean "to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD"?
10. What does it mean "to inquire in his temple"?
11. How does the finished work of Christ make the Law/Word beautiful to us?
12. Doing the Word of God is itself the experience of God's presence in our lives. It is an experience made possible only because we are joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, who obeyed this Scripture perfectly for us (cf. Phil 2:12-13). Discuss.
13. "Before you can be a student of the Word, you must first be a pray-er of the Word." Discuss.
14. How do we grow more and more in our desire for *God* as the One Thing that is most important to us?