

*Sunday, May 24, 2020*

## **Bible Study**

### **Psalm 27**

#### **The Text: READ Psalm 27**

Verses 1-6 are the Psalmist's confession of faith, and verses 7-12 are his prayer for help based upon that confession of faith. The final verses are a concluding testimonial (v. 13) and a call for others to have faith, hope, and courage as they also wait on the Lord (v. 14).

The Psalmist begins his Psalm by referring to God as his light, his salvation, and his stronghold. For him, his life can be lived in fear or in faith, but not both at the same time. So, he chooses faith. Because God is his light, salvation, and stronghold he has nothing to fear. In verses 2-3 he recalls times in his past when God met the need at hand. Therefore, based on God's actions in the past, our Psalmist knows that he can trust God to handle similar difficult and trying times in the present or future.

He can maintain this level of trust in God (vv. 5-6; "*He will*") because of the **one thing** he wants more than anything else (v. 4): to experience the very presence of God.

To "dwell in the house of the Lord" (v. 4) means more than simply to live in the temple. The Psalmist is singing about dwelling with the Lord. Abiding in his presence always. This is the same "abiding" that Jesus taught us when He taught about "abiding" in Him, as branches "abide" in the vine. So, the Psalmist wants nothing except to dwell in the presence of God, and live there "all the days of [his] life".

He then says that he wants to "gaze upon the beauty of the Lord" (v. 4). To "gaze upon the beauty of the Lord" conveys the same desire of verse 8; to seek God's face. This is a striking sentiment since the Hebrew tradition had it that no one could see God's face and live. The Psalmist knows this, and yet, in his desire for intimacy with God he can think of no stronger language than this.

The last element of the Psalmist's "**one thing** I ask (or desire)" is to "inquire (or seek Him) in His temple". This word for "inquire" also means to "meditate on", and to "seek a word from". And so, he seeks God and meditates upon God, in God's house, until he has received that presence through which he knows God as light, salvation, and stronghold.

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As mentioned earlier, the Psalmist prayer is only possible because of the faith of which he testifies in verse 1-6. And his testimony is only possible because of that **One Thing** he desires above all else.

In Mark's Gospel when Jesus encounters the rich young man (*Mark 10:17-31*) we see again this phrase, "One Thing". "And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack **one thing**: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me" (*Mark 10:21*). This rich young man had come to Jesus wanting to know how to receive eternal life. Jesus pointed him to the Ten Commandments. The man stated that he was already obeying the laws of God and had been doing so all his life. Then Jesus said, "**you lack one thing**." Many things you have done...but you lack **THE ONE THING**. Jesus pointed out to him that he loved his position, prestige, and possessions more than he loved God.

A similar thing happened when Jesus went to the home of some of his friends and followers (*Mark 10:38-42*). "But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but **one thing** is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her'" (*Mark 10:41-42*). Martha was busy with many things, bustling around the house working hard to be a good host. Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to Him teach. She was busy with **THE ONE THING**.

Paul also understood this "one thing" when he wrote to the Philippians, "But **one thing** I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (*Philippians 3:13-14*). In reality, the truth of that **ONE THING** boils down to a very familiar verse. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you" (*Matthew 6:33*).

The prayer of this faith-full Psalmist is the focus of Pastor Kelly's sermon. The Psalmist's prayer points out at two factors in His prayer relationship with God: he seeks God's very presence and then he waits for the Lord (*v. 14*). His life of living into that ONE THING, has given him the faith to speak and request of the Lord, and then to wait and listen. Too often our prayers are merely talking and asking with little or no listening.

Dear Christian, the purpose of prayer is to bend our wills (our hearts, minds, souls, and energies) to the will of our Lord. If we do not listen when we pray; if we do not wait on the Lord when we pray, then we will miss His guiding, life-giving,

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protecting presence. The Psalmist of Psalm 27 could stand on his testimony of faith in God, because he had listened and waited and experienced God's presence as his light, and salvation, and stronghold. We too can experience God's presence, behold His beauty, and find Him when we seek Him, if we, like the Psalmist, desire that ONE THING: to dwell with Him all the days of our lives.

“This one thing I do [and desire]...I press on toward the goal...I seek first the kingdom of God...that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.”

**May you “inquire of the Lord in His house”, “behold His beauty”, and dwell in His presence all the days of your life. May you desire only the ONE THING.**

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#### **Questions for Further Reflection**

In what three ways does the Psalmist describe God (v. 1)? What do you think he means by each? How do each of them relate to David's confidence (vv. 2-3)?

If you asked for “one thing”, like David does here (v. 4), what would it be? What does the phrase “seek God's face” mean to you (v. 8)? “Seek His face” is echoed by Jesus in Matthew 6:33: “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these other things will be given to you as well.” Is seeking God's face (or kingdom) first for you? If not, what distracts you from “putting first things first”?

What is the relationship between “seeking” and “waiting” for God (v. 14)? In what ways is the Christian life like “seeking” and “waiting”? How does “seeking” and “waiting” relate to your prayer life?

How has the Lord been like a “light” for you this past month? In what ways has the Lord been like a stronghold in your life? Have there been any situations in your life that have driven you to God for shelter? How would you describe the sense of God's presence at that point of need?

In your relationship with God, where does He stand: 1. Closer to you than your own parents (v. 10); 2. More like a distant relative; or 3. Somewhere in between? Why is that? What will it take for you to get even better acquainted with God? More seeking? More waiting? Both? What steps will you undertake to increase “seeking” and “waiting” in your life with God?