



Growth Group Curriculum Winter 2021
The Songs We Sing - Psalms in the New Year
Week 4 – January 31, 2021 - Psalm 27

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. In this time of the virus and social distancing, please meet safely outside or online. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at connect@ljpres.org. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

Setting the Context

Psalm 27 is an honest prayer from the heart of David. He knows who God is, but he still has fear. This psalm is helpful for us in our prayer lives because it gives us words to use when we want to trust God, based on what we know, yet our anxieties cause us to have doubts.

The psalm opens up with a testimony of trust and confidence. The first verse acknowledges the character of God, while also recognizing that there are real adversaries in this world. The confidence found in verse two is reflective of the ways God has moved in history. Time and time again, God has defeated armies and enemies and this is why David is able to rest in the house of the Lord.

The first six verses alone could be considered a complete psalm, yet the psalm continues. At verse 7, this psalm of testimony and thanksgiving turns to an urgent prayer for protection. David is asking for God to listen to him and to show him grace. He is “seeking the face” of the Lord and pleading for a response. This act of “seeking” is not so much about David seeking God, as it is about God responding to the “seeking.” Even though David has experienced the goodness and faithfulness of God, he still has some fear that God might turn away from him in his time of need.

The psalm ends in a place of confidence, that comes from being challenged by the process of trusting God. The final two verses (13-14) hearken back to Old Testament stories of the goodness of God: “I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

To be strong, courageous, and to take heart is the opposite of fear and anxiety. These were the words spoken to Joshua and the Israelites as they were about to enter the Promised Land. We find words of strength and courage also spoken to Solomon as he is beginning to build the temple. All of these tasks required great trust and dependence on God, especially when Joshua and Solomon could not see the whole path ahead of them.



The goodness of God is experienced through all things good and beautiful in our world. When we begin to recognize that all good things come from God we are able to live a life that is full of praise and worship. It is through this praise and worship we are able to build our confidence in the Lord. This will enable us to pray prayers of confidence that are built on the goodness of God.

Exploring the Text

Read Psalm 27

¹The 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? ²When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. ³Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. ⁴One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. ⁵For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. ⁶Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD. ⁷Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. ⁸My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek. ⁹Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior. ¹⁰Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me. ¹¹Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. ¹²Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations. ¹³I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. ¹⁴Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Were you scared of the dark when you were a kid?
- 2) When was the last time you were afraid, or felt a sense of dread?
- 3) In looking at verse 4, what did David want more than anything else? How can worship and prayer in your daily life impact your ability to trust God? If you could ask for “one thing” of the Lord what would it be?
- 4) In his sermon, Pastor Paul read from John 20:19-22. In this passage we find the disciples hiding and locking the door because they were afraid of what might happen to them. John tells us that Jesus appeared in the room and stood among them and offered them his peace. Jesus didn’t wait for them to have faith to deal with their fears. Instead, he showed up and stood in their midst and gave them the faith to confront their fears. He spoke his peace to them. Do you find this image helpful as you think about how God helps us deal with our fears?
- 5) Are you fearful that God will turn away from you when you need him the most? Why or why not?
- 6) We live in a world that is filled with all sorts of opinions and information. It can be encouraging and it can be discouraging. Psalm 27 speaks about the issues of trust and fear. Do you find yourself talking and living more from a place of fear, or trust? Why?



- 7) What do you think David meant when he said, “The Lord is my light”? Think about the different times that “light” is used in the Bible (for example, Psalm 119:105, Numbers 6:24-26, Matthew 5:15-16, John 1:5, John 8:12). Why do you think the image of light is used so often in the Bible?
- 8) What do you think David means in verse 13, when he says that he will see the “goodness of the Lord in the land of the living?” How does this thought help him deal with his fears?

