

Psalm 27

Steadfast in the Midst of Fear

Image Church // Steadfast #1

Introduction

Well good morning Image Family, it's good to be back with you this weekend! I appreciate **Pastor Rod** bringing the Word last week with a very timely message, if you missed it, make sure to check it out on our App!

Last weekend I had the privilege of speaking at a summer camp for a couple of churches in **Gastonia NC** with around 200 folks, and God showed up in a big way- there were around 20 students that made decisions to surrender in some capacity... And so, it was a special week!

*I've also grown in my appreciation for **deodorant and showers**, because apparently that's optional for middle school and high school boys, especially at camp...* And don't even get me started on **oral hygiene**... I don't think some of them even touched their toothbrush all week...

Anyway, I'm glad to be back and excited about this weekend! If you're a **FTG** with us, we're so glad that you're here- you picked a great weekend to join us as we kick off a new series this weekend called **Steadfast**...

Where we're going to be looking at how we can remain **steadfast in the midst of life**... We live in an inconsistent world, we're inconsistent people- and it seems like we're always dealing with something in life... Certain circumstances, sins, or struggles...

We're always dealing with how we view ourselves and how we view God... Or we're walking in the midst of letdowns trying to find hope, or we're dealing with certain fears about the future...

At any given moment, each one of us is dealing with something in our lives, and so **the question is, in the midst of everything that we're experiencing how do we remain steadfast?**

What truths can you hold onto? Where can you turn- what can you claim, where can you find hope and confidence? Where do you find calm in the chaos? Where can you find rest in the business of life?

See, for many of us we go through life and we're experiencing different things and we want to hear from God- we want some assurance of truth from Him...

And what we miss is that God's already spoken through His Word, we just need to know where to look...

And so, this summer we're going to be looking at the book of **Psalms** where you're going to see some incredible truths that God's given you to be able to hold onto about Him regardless of what you're going through...

I love the book of **Psalms**, it's been huge for me and my life giving me concrete things that I can claim in every season of life... It is the place that I often turn to the most, and it is the place where I point people when they need to hear the truth of God...

- *Many of which we're going to be walking through together...*

And so, my hope for you this summer, is that you would walk away with an arsenal of Psalms that become a central place for you to go, the place where you turn, something for you to hold onto. Something that helps you see God for who He is and what He offers you regardless of what you're going through...

And that ultimately, this would lead you deeper into the Word of God, and that you would see it as a source of life!

We're going to be kicking off this series in **Psalms 27**, so if you have you're Bibles go ahead and turn there...

- Psalms is one of the easiest books to find... right in the middle
- If you don't have a Bible we have one for you

As you're turning there let me give you a little context- **David** is the author of this Psalm... David went from being a little shepherd boy to being the King of Israel... We love stories like that where people go from the low of the low to being on top of it all...

- **Curt Warner: from bagging groceries to NFL MVP...**

But here's the thing, David's story wasn't all rainbows and butterflies. He spent most of his life on the run... And when he wasn't at war with other nations, he was being hunted down by his own people...

And it was through the adversity that God uses David to pin some powerful words for the purpose of you and me... So that we would be able to know God more through David's experiences...

So, let's jump into **Psalm 27** and hold up the truths that God wants us to see...

Psalm 27:1-14

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation—
whom should I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life—
whom should I dread?

2 When evildoers came against me to devour my flesh,
my foes and my enemies stumbled and fell.

3 Though an army deploys against me,
my heart will not be afraid;
though a war breaks out against me,
I will still be confident.

David's a guy that has legitimate reason to be afraid, he never knows what lies around the corner, he has no idea who's going to come up against him next, or who is going to be coming after him... And it's in

light of that, that he writes this as looks back over his life and as he anticipates what's to come...

Here's the thing, you probably don't have an army that's going to be chasing after you in the near future- *at least I hope not...* But just because you don't have an army looming over the horizon doesn't mean that you don't have fears about the future...

Fear is a real thing (*Even for a tough guy like David who killed bears that tried to take sheep from his flock*) ... So, let me ask you this, what are your biggest fears? What is it that you're most afraid of- what keeps you up at night?

- Your future?
- You kids future?
- Your health?
- Your finical future?
- Being single the rest of your life?
- Not becoming what you always dreamed or making it in your profession?
- Not finding the right job?
- Letting someone down?
- Your marriage falling apart?
- Making the wrong decision with something big in your life?

We all have fears, what is it for you?

Maybe you have people who are coming after you... maybe it's a boss or a co-worker, or a family member... And your constantly feeling attacked and belittled where you always leave feeling defeated... Here is the thing about things that you fear and things that you dread...

They weigh on you, they can make you anxious, they can keep you up at night or make you restless, they can consume your thoughts, they can even dictate your mood...

And yet, what we see from David is a bold and calming confidence in the midst of his fears about the future... And this isn't the power of positive thinking that David's leaning into here...

See, in our culture people want to hold up the fact that **your fears don't define you**, but the problem is the solution that's often given...

Let me give you an example, I want to share with you a mainstream way that suggested for dealing with your fears, here are the steps that are given to dealing with your fear:¹

1. Allow yourself to sit with your fear for 2-3 minutes at a time. Breathe with it and say, "It's okay."
2. Write down the things you are grateful for.
3. Remind yourself that your anxiety is a storehouse of wisdom.
4. Exercise
5. Use humor to deflate your worst fears.
6. Appreciate your courage.

Here's the problem with all of that- There's nothing listed in those steps that gives you confidence in the midst of fear... Those steps help redirect your thoughts, but they don't give you any alternative to source of hope to hold onto.

You don't need is to redirect your thoughts off your fear, what you need is to be able to hold onto something greater than your fear...

And that's exactly what David is doing... Look at the declaration that he starts with in **verse 1...**

He says: **The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom should I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life— whom should I dread?**

His confidence is built on something greater than His fears... His confidence comes from the Lord... And look at how he describes the Lord...

- **He is his Light**- The Lord is a force that automatically dispels darkness... The Lord provides the ability to be fearless even in the face of death's dark shadow... No matter what darkness seems to be lurking around the corner, God is the light that expels the darkness...
- **The Lord is also his Salvation**- salvation means victory or deliverance... And God's able to give victory regardless of how bad the odds that are staked against you...
- **The Lord is the Stronghold of his life**- a place of safety, a refuge in the midst of danger or trouble...

Here's what we need to see, **the foundation for David's confidence is built on *who* God is...**

Let me tell you this, your fears will always take you captive, and they'll always consume you, and they'll always overwhelm you- when you're not seeing God for *who* He is...

When you forget who God is, when you take your eyes off of Him, your fears rise to the top and become the focal point of your life, and what happens is your fears then begin to dictate and shape your energy and your emotions instead of God...

And so, you feel overwhelmed and exhausted, because your spending all your time, energy and emotions on your fears... And you're constantly in **what if** mode where your fearful of what could happen or what might happen...

And all of the sudden you end up being consumed by your fears of the unknown...

But what David's going to show us here in **Psalms 27**, is that instead of being consumed by the unknown, we need to turn our eyes to what's known...

¹ <https://www.psycom.net/facing-your-fear>

See, **David uses his fear to reorient his heart** to the one true source of hope.

Instead of allowing his fears to shape him, he allows his fear to redirect him...

Watch this, look at what David says here in **verse 4**:

4 I have asked one thing from the Lord;
it is what I desire:
to dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
gazing on the beauty of the Lord
and seeking him in his temple.

What David's asking for here isn't to be in a particular building or space, what he's asking for is to be in the presence of God!

David doesn't want to be **preoccupied** with his problems, he wants to be preoccupied by the presence of God... He wants to seek and inquire wisdom from God in the midst of what he's going through...

And here's something you need to understand, and we're going to come back to this...

- But for David the way that he was able to experience the glory of God and the way that he could seek and inquire God happened in the Temple...

It was there that he could see and experience the glory of God, it was there that he could inquire things from God...
And it was when he beholds the glory of God he's **reminded** of who God is and what God's capable of...

And then again, we see David's confidence as he anticipates what the Lord's going to do, look at **verse 5**... He says:

5 For he will conceal me in his shelter
in the day of adversity;
he will hide me under the cover of his tent;

he will set me high on a rock.

6 Then my head will be high
above my enemies around me;

I will offer sacrifices in his tent with shouts of joy.

I will sing and make music to the Lord.

In light of his fear, in the midst of uncertainty David directs his gaze toward God as the source of safety and refuge and hope...

And then watch what David says here in **verse 7** as he calls out to God

7 Lord, hear my voice when I call;
be gracious to me and answer me.

He's saying Lord you have heard the desires of my heart to seek you in the midst of my fear... I am only asking one thing- *to be in your presence*- I want unlimited access to you because that's where I can find confidence, hope and security...

The gracious answer that David is after isn't the removal of his fears but the presence of God...

This is what David's pointing to in **verse 8**...

8 My heart says this about you:

"Seek his face."

Lord, I will seek your face.

He's saying that his central focus is to know God- when David says he is going to seek God's face, he's saying he wants to know God intimately, personally, relationally...
Until you spend time with someone face to face you don't really know them...

Example:

- *I can stick my head under the hood of a Ford F-150... which happens a lot if you own a Ford- you get a Chevy you don't ever have to do that...*

- But just because I put my head under the hood of a Ford and I see the fruit of his handy work, **doesn't** mean that I know Henry Ford...

Unless I had the chance to sit down with him when He was alive and talk with him face to face I don't really know him...

David's saying, I really want to know you and experience a relationship with you, that's what I am seeking after because you are the one source of refuge and safety that never changes...

Is that the desire of your heart? To really know God- to see His face and behold His glory?

And then he says in **verse 9** ...

9 Do not hide your face from me;
do not turn your servant away in anger.

You have been my helper;
do not leave me or abandon me,
God of my salvation.

10 Even if my father and mother abandon me,
the Lord cares for me.

David is saying to the Lord, do not withhold action from me- not the action of freeing him from his fears, but the action of allowing David to experience the presence of God!

David wants God more than anything because he knows God is bigger and better than everything!

And then he declares the truths of God back to God...

One of the best ways to pray is by declaring the truths of God back to God... We see this often throughout the Bible...

Because here's what's happening when you do that- you are reorienting your heart around who God is...

Regardless of what you are feeling and regardless of what you're up against you're choosing to acknowledge God for who He is as you make a verbal proclamation not based on feelings but based on truth!

David choosing to hold fast to the fact that God is His Salvation- and that God cares about him, and that He will never leave him even if the people closest to him do!

And he makes 2 specific petitions right here, he says:

11 Because of my adversaries,
show me your way, Lord,
and lead me on a level path.

12 Do not give me over to the will of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
breathing violence.

And then he makes a final statement of confidence as he looks to the future:

13 I am certain that I will see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.

And here's David's address to us as readers:

14 Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart be courageous.
Wait for the Lord.

Here's what I want you to see in all of this- here's what's at the core of what's happening in Psalms 27... David saw through his fears to a God who had promised to protect and deliver him....

David could do this because he remembered how **faithful God had been in the past**... He declares it at the beginning...

- Light, Salvation, Stronghold...

David saw God for who He is and that's what enabled him to see through his fears to a God of hope...

And the place that helped to shape his heart in this direction would have been the **temple**...

It was in the temple that David would be reminded of how perfect and Holy God was:

- How there was a reverence around who God is based on everything that was done...
 - Remember I've told you that everything that happened in regards to the law was designed to show the separation between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man...
- How there had to be sacrifices made, how there had to be all these different kinds of cleansings just to enter...
- How there was a place called the Holy of Holies where the high priest would mediate for the nation of Israel...

And David would watch as all of this would happen in the temple, and David knew that the temple is where he could go to hear from the Lord...

And so, the overflow ad desire of David's heart in light of what he saw about God was to beg to be able to be in the presence of God- indefinitely with complete and total access...

- David couldn't live in the temple...
- David didn't want to have to go to the temple to experience God... He wanted to be able to stay in the presence of God even when He wasn't in the temple...

He wanted to be able to gaze on the face of God- which is really a death wish... Moses...

- **Exodus 33:20** "You cannot see my face, for humans cannot see me and live."
- He, like **Moses** wanted to see the glory of God... He wants to know God intimately, to be in a relationship with Him...

And yet how is any of this possible? No one had been able to do anything that David was asking for... How could David even have the confidence to ask for it??

Because **David was trusting in the future hope of God's promises...** That God would one day send a deliverer who would come and rescue mankind from their sin and separation from God... And that through the deliverer man could finally be right with God and rescued from the wrath of God...

The Temple was a picture of Jesus... All the pieces and all of the elements pointed to Him... And in Him and through Him we escape the greatest fear of all and that's the wrath of of God and eternal separation from God...

Jesus would be our **light** that would dispel darkness, offering us **salvation** from our sin through His perfect life in our place and His death that we owed...

And then He would give us **victory** over death by raising from the dead and solidifying himself as the stronghold of our lives because he has done everything necessary to save us- there is nothing else that's needed and there is nothing that can take that away- He is the **stronghold!**

The question is, have you believed in the finished work of **Jesus the deliverer?!?**

Listen to me- everything that David was longing for you have access to through Christ!

- You can have unlimited access to the presence of God through the power of Christ!
- You want to see the face of God, look at Jesus!
- Jesus makes it possible for us to be in an intimate and personal relationship with the God of the universe!

- Jesus makes it possible for us to be in the presence of God for all of eternity- to be able to look on the glory of God- to experience the limitless protection of God forever!!!

Listen, the absolute scariest thing, the greatest fear, the biggest terror is standing in opposition to God... And that's the state that we're in apart from Christ- but through Christ that fear has been obverted!

For those of you that have trusted in Jesus you can rest knowing that you are not in opposition of the God that made you! And you can know that where you'll spend eternity has been taken care of...

- *Your travel plans have been taken care of...*

One of the greatest fears in our culture today is life after death- Jesus gives us confidence to look past death to the glory of God that will be revealed to us for all of eternity!

David was able to look back to the past to see the faithfulness of God to give Him hope for the future... The same is true for us...

- You look back to the cross to give you hope for the future in the face of your fears...

And you're able to say with David...

**1 The Lord is my light and my salvation—
whom should I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life—
whom should I dread?**

And instead of allowing your fears to shape you, you allow your fears to redirect you to the power and presence of God that's been revealed through Christ!

Practically, I want to deal with a few things when it comes to addressing your fears...

David, the kind of Israel found himself in places like this often where he had to work through his fears...

I would imagine that this isn't exactly how he thought things would go for him... I doubt he expected to live his life with a target on his back where his own people, neighboring nations and even his family would be coming after him...

I doubt he expected that as the king, that he would live in an expected future with dangers and things to fear around every corner...

*******[Vamp]*******

There are some of you here like David and life hasn't turned out how you expected it... You were after a life where there was little to no fear in it and yet the exact opposite is true...

You have huge fears in your life right now, there are massive expectancies... maybe with your kids or your health or the health of your family or your job... I don't know what it is that's looming over you...

I can't promise you that your fears will subside, but I can promise you that in Christ you can walk through your fears...

Psalms 23:4 Ye though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me!

You have the ability to walk through even death itself and not be shaken because Jesus took on death for you... You can have the confidence of knowing that He is with you...

And that regardless of what happens in this life there is hope...

Example: How we have walked through fear with Braxton...

God's answer in the midst of you fear may not be to remove the thing that you're fearful of.

It's easy for us to assume that **God's answer** is to give us what we want, but what we want may not be what we need...

So, God may leave your fears intact to keep your dependence on Him... See, often times it's in our fears and uncertainties about the future that our faith is refined the most...

It is easy to trust God when things are good, it's when things are uncertain that we really see where our heart is...

Fear of what the future holds can be the thing that keeps us tethered to God as we trust Him to see us through...

David learned to pray, David learned to worship, and David learned to depend on God...

And listen, it was *through David's poetic processing of his hope and joy in God in the face of overwhelming circumstances, God provided all of us more holy language and practical examples of how to encourage our faith, how to pray, and how to sing than any other single biblical author.*²

The way that David dealt with his fears has become a ministry to us...

There is no telling how you might minister to others in the midst of your fear...

Don't forget how big and powerful God is!

- Remember who He is...

² Jon Bloom, Article. *Is Life Harder than you expected?* July 14, 2017.

- David was anchored to the promises of God...

How:

The way that we know God is by looking to Jesus and filling ourselves with His Word...

- By being around the people of God
- By worshiping God- reorienting our hearts around who He is, that He is bigger and better than anything we may face in this life...

Ask God to teach you in the midst of your fears

Conclusion

David says teach me your way God... Sow me how you are better and greater than my fears... Give me the ability to trust you in the midst...

When David put his trust in God, he put his trust, even his praise, in God's word. He didn't pray vague prayers of hope, but anchored his pain and longing and fear in specific promises of God.

When I am afraid, I cling to you in your word. Instead of dwelling on the terrifying mountains in front of me, I set my mind on what you have said to those who love you. Suddenly, the threats no longer seem threatening because they're being drowned out by a louder voice.

When fears come — and they will come, even today — you know where to turn. You know the voice you need to hear, the voice that instills a peace that surpasses all understanding. And he says to you, "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world". And because you are in him, and he lives in you, through faith, you have overcome the world.

You can say with David, "I shall not be afraid."³

³ Marshall Segal, Article. *When I am Afraid.* March 9, 2018.
