

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, July 2, 2014 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

A LOOK AT PSALM 27 “A Stand Alone Study of Psalm 27”

Among all our internal jitters, none is more paralyzing than fear. So much of life is accompanied by fearful feelings. So many otherwise enjoyable and fulfilling experiences are not undertaken because the roads leading to them, as Paul Tournier puts it, are “guarded by the dragon of fear” (*The Strong and the Weak*). True, vivid words! The simple fact is... no one is ever completely rid of all fears. Our goal, therefore, as believers is to find some help in understanding and dealing with our fears so that they don't paralyze us and keep us from moving forward in the faith. Chances are you will not arrive at an absolute absence of fear on this side of heaven. Since fear is one of our constant companions, it will be helpful to learn how to maintain something of a mastery over it... how to make it work for us rather than against us.

The Bible mentions two specific types of fear.

2 Types of Fear Mentioned in the Bible:

- 1. The fear of the Lord** - The first type is beneficial and is to be encouraged. The first type of fear is fear of the Lord. This type of fear does not necessarily mean to be afraid of something. Rather, it is a reverential awe of God; a reverence for His power and glory. However, it is also a proper respect for His wrath and anger. In other words, the fear of the Lord is a total acknowledgement of all that God is, which comes through knowing Him and His attributes. Fear of the Lord brings with it many blessings and benefits. It is the beginning of wisdom and leads to good understanding (Psalm 111:10). Only fools despise wisdom and discipline (Proverbs 1:7). Furthermore, fear of the Lord leads to life, rest, peace, and contentment (Proverbs 19:23). It is the fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27) and provides a security and a place of safety for us (Proverbs 14:26). Thus, one can see how fearing God should be encouraged.
- 2. The spirit of fear** - The second type is a detriment and is to be overcome. The second type of fear mentioned in the Bible is not beneficial at all. This is the “spirit of fear” mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:7, “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*” (NKJV). A spirit of fearfulness and timidity does not come from God. However, sometimes we are afraid, sometimes this “spirit of fear” overcomes us, and to overcome it we need to trust in and love God completely. As John says in 1 John 4:18, “*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*” No one is perfect, and God knows this. That is why He has liberally sprinkled encouragement against fear throughout the Bible. Beginning in the book of Genesis and continuing throughout the book of Revelation, God reminds us to “Fear not.”

For example, Isaiah 41:10 encourages us, *“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”*

Because fear, especially the spirit of fear, is such a common trait for mankind in general the Bible is full of example of even godly men and women who struggled and wrestled with fear. The 27th Psalm is a look at one such Biblical character, David, and what he has to say about fear.

I. AN OVERALL GLANCE AT PSALM 27

Psalm 27 was apparently composed by David prior to his anointing (installation) as Israel’s king. This anointing was different from the one performed by Samuel in David’s father’s presence. For some time Israel’s monarch, Saul, had targeted his jealous hatred toward his faithful subject, David. His attacks were savage and perilous, designed to injury – even death. David had every human reason to be afraid.

1. **Scope of the Psalmist** – David’s thoughts traveled along two subjects. Some would call this psalm a song of contrasts:

2 Subjects of Psalm 27:

- (1) **Faith (vv.1-6)** – The first half of the psalm reflects David’s faith in the face of great challenges... challenges that could cause him to have great fear. Reminders such as *“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)* are a reflection of David’s faith in the face of his fears. It is almost as if David is reminding himself, while afraid, why he shouldn’t be.
- (2) **Fear (vv.7-14)** – Obviously from this psalm we can see that David was in trouble. He speaks of adversaries, enemies, evil men who wish to devour his flesh and attack him, and war against him, and the toughest part is that David was not imagining this terrifying scene... it was a reality for his life. Perils were all around him. He walk on the edge of danger for much of his life and faced very really fears. Some fears may be imaginary, but these were not and many of our are not either. The reality is there are many, many things in this life to fear and be afraid of.

2. Outline of the Psalm –

- (1) **Statement of Truth and theme of the song (v.1)** – The phrase, *“... whom shall I fear...”* and *“of whom shall I be afraid?”* in verse 1 is the key to understanding the psalm.
- (2) **Declaration of trust (vv.2-6)**
- (3) **Prayer for strength (vv.7-13)**
- (4) **Conclusion: Wait! (v.14)**

II. AN INTERNAL ANALYSIS

1. **Statement of Truth (v.1)** – *“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?”*

2 Statements of Truth:

- (1) **Truth Statement of our Strength** – David mentions light, salvation, and stronghold – note that David didn't say that the Lord provided these benefits, but that He Himself was those very things – at all times. The understanding of this is critical.
- (2) **Truth Statement of our Fear - Observe that each phrase is trailed by a probing question, "... whom shall I fear?" "... of whom shall I be afraid?" Though these appear similar, each is actually quite different and he speaks of the reality of fears we face in this life. Note that David does not deny the presence of fear or fears, but he identifies them and calls them by name**

2 Types of Fears:

- **Fears of Life** - The term "fear" is used in David's first question in it's normal, everyday sense – "a feeling of anxiety, agitation caused by the nearness or presence of danger or pain." Hence fears of life.
 - **Fears of Man and Circumstances** - On the other hand, the term "afraid" means "to be in awe... intimidated by someone (people) or something (circumstances)."
2. **Declaration of Trust (vv.2-6)** – David's conflict was intense. He was alone. Saul's army was against him solely. He spoke of the intimidating forces in such terms as "evil men" out to "devour my flesh" and as "enemies" in verse 2. In verse 3 he refers to them as a "army" besieging him." They were an ever-present source of threat. Looking ahead to verse 10 we see that even his parents had forsaken him. He was rejected on all fronts – except by God. However David's reaction is worth noting in the second half of *verse 3, "... though war break out against me, even then will I be confident."* Verses 4-6 describe his mindset of security – the single source of that security was his Lord. David's life wasn't polluted with deceptive techniques and clever reactions. Invariably, when intimidated we are more conscious of the person or event "shouting" the threats than we are of the Lord. Not so with David.

David's single source of security and trust was the Lord!

3. **Prayer for Support (vv.7-13)** – At certain times, subjects are not enhanced by technical analysis or verse-by-verse dissection. In these verses we observe David requesting God's support. His prayer wasn't complicated, loaded down with religious words and clichés. He used everyday words which revealed a heart fully given to prayer. The verse alone reveal this...
- "Hear... be merciful... answer me" (v.7)
 - "Do not hide...turn... reject... or forsake me" (v.9)
 - "Teach me... lead me" (v.11)
 - "Do not turn me over to... my foes" (v.12)

David expressed bold, unrestrained fervency in his communication to God, but we often act in powerless fashion. We need to catch a bit more of David's heart.

4. **Conclusion: Wait! (v.14)** – At this point we come full-circle in this series – “Growing Pains.” The first study was entitled “Growing though Waiting.” Now David comes back to a quiet stance in his own situation. All the activity he could generate couldn’t solve his problem with Saul. So he said to himself (and says to us also), *“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” (v.14).*

III. PRACTICAL RESPONSES

Fear is extremely common. There are phobias of all sorts which try to clutch our minds. They can be relentless. So, what can we do to ward them off, or handle them successfully when they war against us?

Practical Steps For Dealing With Fear:

1. **As they occur... admit them (v.1)** – Identify and openly call them by name (v.1) Do this... identify our fear right now. What is it that you fear? Identify it and openly call it by name.
2. **If they grow... commit them (v.7)** – Commit it to the Lord! The Lord awaits this, so give it to Him.
3. **As you pray... release them (v.11)** – As you commit it to the Lord this should lead to release. Are you feeling freed from it?
4. **As you release them... resist them (v.13)** – What can you do to resist the fear’s return? Think through this very carefully. It will bring future victory.
5. **As you resist them... be strong** – Reread Psalm 27 and ask God for strength in this area of your life. Claim Ephesians 6:10 and following and *“Stand strong in the Lord and the power of His might.”*, then get fully clothed in the armor of God as you battle the things you fear.