

Sunday morning August 12th 2018 at CBC
Psalm 27 How does a Christian deal with fear?

Psalms are songs. They are expressions of emotion. And human beings express emotion about things that matter to them.

Psalms are responses to the God who is revealed in the Old Testament.

This psalm, like most of the psalms, is a response to the God who may be personally known – the LORD.

[1] CONFIDENCE EXPRESSED [1-3]

We do not know the precise circumstances to which this psalm might originally have been attached, so we will not ransack the life of David and try and find a suitable match. Rather, we will start by noting his expression of confidence in verses 1-3.

[a] Three frightening scenarios

Here are three threats

- The wicked are advancing
- An army is besieging
- War is expected

[b] Three surprising responses

But although our author is clearly contemplating these fearful prospects, his response is not what you might expect.

- He will not fall, but his enemies will.
- Though he is surrounded, he will not be afraid.
- And even if war breaks out, he will be confident.

[c] Three personal statements

The answer, or at the very least the beginning of the answer, is found in verse 1. How does our author, David, view the Lord? What is the Lord to him? Here are three personal statements, three testimonies:

My light

My salvation

My stronghold

[2] CONFIDENCE ACQUIRED [4-12]

How do you acquire this sort of confidence which stands firm in the face of frightening threats?

Verses 4-12 give us some answers.

[a] a clear priority

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek:
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 seek him in his temple (house). NIV

We cannot get to where David is in this psalm unless we make our priority the same as his. That may mean a big rethink. Arguably, if this is not our priority, we have an idol in the place of God. And no good comes of that.

[b] a resulting confidence

The confidence in the Lord is expressed in various pictures:

- A shelter in a day of trouble
- A place of concealment in His tent

- A safe place on a high (=implied) rock
- A victorious place above defeated enemies

[c] a reason for singing

And this confidence leads to (notice, is not produced by) shouts of joy and songs of praise. Here is the response of the emotions. It is founded on this determination to know the Lord.

[d] a prayer of trust

We find an expression of prayer in verses 7-12. It arises from the focus expressed in verse 4 and the confidence that follows, as we have just seen.

“Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject or forsake me, God my Saviour.”

Surely, are there not times when we pray when even as we express confidence we can hardly believe that we have the right to such confidence? So confidence can grow, even as we struggle to accept our right to that confidence. That is what we find here.

[3] CONFIDENCE EXPRESSED [13-14]

Having read the psalm we now know how David could be so confident. So we can, and our surely meant to, identify with the expression of trust in the Lord, a trust that may well mean waiting until the Lord shows his hand, as he will in due time. If we are going to look upon the Lord, we shall also wait for him.

CONCLUSION

We are studying this psalm in the 'last days', that is to say in the gospel era, when God has spoken to us by his son.

[Hebrews 1:1-3]

In John 14.2 Jesus spoke of his father's house having many rooms:

14 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you."

and in verse 23 of the same chapter he said:

"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

It is through faith in Jesus that we begin the process of discovering the beauty of the Lord and of developing our relationship with him. The fears of this world, whatever those fears may be, never look as great or as threatening when your greatest priority is to know the Lord and to know him better. He has promised to make his home in us who believe in him, and also to take us safely home.

When in faith, and through the growing knowledge of his word, we have sought the face of the Lord through faith in Christ, the threats of the world, whatever they may be, become less significant. Let our confidence this morning be in Him and in Him alone. To God be the glory, amen.