

Book	Psalms – Study 6
Topic	Praying His Beauty
Reference	Psalms 27
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Psalms 27:1-3 (ESV) 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 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. 3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident

This song is about confidence in the Lord's protection. It is a psalm by David. David went through a tumultuous time even when he was going to be chosen and anointed as the king of Israel there was another king at the same time. That king was King Saul and King Saul pursued David relentlessly into the desert when he was alone and abandoned and he had lots of fears about him. During this time, he wrote the 70 over psalms over his whole life. All the psalms reflect how he feels. So therefore, this is his confidence. His confidence in the Lord's protection.

What is the Lord to you?

Light: light means the joy of life. Light also means holiness or perfection. Light is also a metaphor for truth.

Salvation: Deliverance from his enemies.

Stronghold: His safety.

This is what the Lord is to David during his time of trouble. The question is what is God to us theoretically and experientially?

Now theoretically we know, we studied in the Book of Ephesians, we studied Book of Romans, you know theoretically what He is. The missing link is to know God experientially. That's the part that will cement your faith. Because without that part, it would be very difficult for you to go through the trials of life and the difficulties of life. You have to experience God as God.

Now if you look at David, the context of David's contemplation. When he was contemplating he had trouble.

2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. 3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

So here he is contemplating evildoers, which is basically the henchman of King Saul, hunting him up. They want to assail me, means beat me up. They want to eat up my flesh, which is metaphorical. So, this is qualitative. They want to harm him. So, these are evildoers, we are talking about people who are evil. There is qualitative desire to harm you and though an army camp against me, this is quantitative, overwhelming odds. So, on one hand, you have got evil people, qualitatively evil, on the other hand, you have got huge army, either end I shall still be confident. That is what he is saying.

Now when you are praying this, you can fit your own struggles in it. So, this is exterior devastation, whatever comes to our side. There are internal struggles too.

Psalms 27:10 (ESV) For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.

So, you actually have an internal struggle, foundational relationships in your life, which are your parents, your siblings, your spouse, your children, they may betray me, they may divorce you, they may leave you. So, this psalm is applicable to every situation, which he now covers. Ernest Becker is a Pulitzer prize winning anthropologist. He wrote a very important Pulitzer winning book called, The denial of death. His thesis was much of culture that we actually have today is all in an attempt to deny death. To live, with this existential anxiety about death. How do we overcome it? We overcome it by having culture. We leave a legacy behind. Because your legacy will extend beyond your death. So that's the way in which you try to deny death. Ernest Becker actually said,

"Taking life seriously means whatever you do must be done in the lived truth of the evil and terror of life of the rumble of panic underneath everything otherwise it is phony"

So, whatever it is that you need to cope with life, whatever system you adopt to cope with life, it must account for the evil and terror of life and the rumble of panic underneath everything. It cannot be pure sentimentality.

The Power Behind David's Life:

It is different from the sentimentality of believing in politicians, believing in your past experience, believing in the vague ideas. So, these are the key verses

Psalms 27:4 (ESV) One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: 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 inquire in his temple.

This actually reflects David's psychology. 1 Samuel describes David. Why did God choose David to be the king? Because Samuel says

1 Samuel 13:14 (ESV) But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."

David has always been described as a man after God's own heart, even though the man over God's own heart may have fallen a few more times than most and yet he is described as the man after God's own heart, simply because of this particular power. He always desire. This is what the pure desire of David is to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of Lord and inquire in his temple.

Psalms 27:7-8 (ESV) Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! 8 You have said, "**Seek my face.**" My heart says to you, "**Your face, Lord, do I seek.**"

When you are seeking God's face, it is a metaphor. The word is 'Panin' in Hebrew. It is for His presence. We are looking for God's presence, experience his presence in a tangible manner, it is a relationship. So, he is seeking a tangible feeling in this particular relationship.

God said to seek my face first, because he say seek my face, you also seek His face. It is a mutual thing, seek my presence. So therefore, Jesus says the same thing, if you look in John,

John 6:44 (ESV) 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

The father draws and they seek Jesus. Unless the father draws them, they won't seek Jesus. It comes together. So, the real son of God, the real adopted son of God, all of us, you have a situation in your heart where God will speak to your heart to seek him and you will desire to seek him. That will be a real point. You might go through five to six days without having your quiet time done and somehow slowly in your heart, you will feel there is an emptiness, there is a home sickness, there is a desire to seek God. That is the Holy Spirit moving inside your heart.

What God's beauty do to us?

Psalms 27:5-6 (ESV) 5 For he will **hide me in his shelter** in the day of trouble; he will **conceal me under the cover of his tent**;

So basically, he will give you security, refuge, he will give you safety.

He will lift me high upon a rock. 6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

This is victory and honour. He feels confident and he is buoyant. So, when you actually seek God's beauty, suddenly you are confident, suddenly you are buoyant. This kind of person, even though he is in trouble, he will always look at the best, because he has sought the beauty of God.

The next thing that will happen when you seek God's beauty, you will offer his tents with shouts of joy. You will have joy, gratitude, love, you sing melody to the Lord. It is like a lover after you, you sing to him. So, there is reciprocal love. There is gratitude and there is joy. So basically, seeking God's beauty will give us refuge, give us confidence and victory and give us joy. He will transform your heart. That is what he does.

To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.

The word is gaze, not glance. Gaze means you sit there and you look at the beauty of the Lord. This beauty of the Lord is a pleasurable perception. You perceive God as pleasurable.

Isaiah 33:17 (ESV) Your eyes will behold the king in his **beauty**; they will see a land that stretches afar

In this context, the beauty means his excellence and perfection.

Psalms 50:2 (ESV) Out of Zion, the perfection of **beauty**, God shines forth

It is attractiveness or desirability, which means when you actually look at God you are looking at his excellence. He is excellent, so He is attractive. If He is attractive, He will be pleasurable and give you satisfaction. There is something happens to the human being when you are in contact with beauty.

We feel pleasure when we see something beautiful, making attractive things feel like they work better.

We are all captivated by beauty. Beauty does something to us.

Why do we like to watch movies that show beautiful landscape instead of movies that just revolve around prison. We watch beauty as it lifts our spirit. The world is attracted to beauty, which is a fact of life.

Beauty creates community through the joy of praise. We delight to praise what we enjoy because praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment. You only enjoy things if you actually express it.

A lot of people have fan club, because they all share the same adulation of the that particular fan.

Beauty creates and infuses hope through the conviction of meaning. So, when you see things like that, you move past your own terrible situation and you believe there is hope for tomorrow. Because when you look at the beautiful landscape and the trees and say the God who created this, I mean there must be hope for tomorrow. So, it infuses meaning. In fact, George Bancroft writes,

Beauty itself is but the sensible image of the infinite,”

Beauty Undermines Selfishness:

When you actually look at something beauty for beauty sake, you actually look away from your self and you actually derive pleasure at looking at something that will actually make you happy. You don't look at your own sorry situation, you actually take your mind off to look at something perfect, something beautiful that takes you away from yourself.

Animals have no appreciation of fine arts or beauty. God has reserved the highest capacity for beauty to the human race. Of all the creatures in the world, only the human race has appreciation for beautiful music, beautiful art, the most that animal can think of is a beautiful piece of steak. That's about it, but only human beings have an appreciation of beauty. Because the God of the universe, everything He created was good, excellent. The good and excellent are the bread crumbs leading to Himself, the perfection of all perfection. Our God is beautiful. In fact C.S. Lewis writes,

“We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words- to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it.”

When you see something beautiful, you actually want to be part of it, you want to merge in it, you want to bathe in it, you want to experience it. So therefore, when

you are looking at art, reading a novel or listening, you actually want to immerse yourself in a different world. People want to escape in the beauty, they want to be part of the beauty, they want to forget the pain of life. We like the ones we watch. That's what beauty does to us.

Aesthetic beauty is what we can feel, we can touch, but there is something beyond that, that has meaning. So, beauty is not only meaning. If Elvis Presley left his dirty towel behind, it will be worth more than my dirty towel, because there is meaning behind that. So beyond aesthetic value there is meaning, which is why you've got shows like Beauty and the Beast. He looks ugly, look like a werewolf but underneath there is meaning, there is loyalty, there is love, there is sacrifice and therefore she sees beyond all that and she falls in love. Beauty extends beyond what you see, it goes into the meaning there.

Beauty is a problem, it can be good and it can be good. Thomas Campion writes, *"Beauty is but a painted hell; shee wounds them that admire it, shee kills them that desire it. Give her pride but fuell, no fire is more cruell."* As a fact there are problems. A lot of eating disorders are based on the pursuit of beauty. So beauty has a two-edged side. Any beauty short of God does not satisfy.

Psalms 16:11 (ESV) 11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence (face) there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

So only in God you can actually have a true appreciation of beauty and that is endless. So, we either glance and go or gaze and dwell. So how do we gaze in this beauty of God.

1. Seek it Existentially
2. Seek it Deliberately
3. Seek it Intelligently
4. Seek it Jesus centrically
5. Seek it Patiently

1. Seek it Existentially:

Psalms 27:4 (ESV) One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: 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 inquire in his temple.

That means it is not enough to know that God is great and glorious, I want to sense of his greatness and gloriousness in my heart. It is different from looking at the bag

of chips and actually tasting the bag of chips. What David is saying that you have to seek it experientially.

2. Seek it deliberately

You set aside time, you praise. There is an expression of delight, of what you admire Him. Which means you actually spend time, sitting at home, may be playing the YouTube or something, choosing songs that describe the beauty. What is it about God that you actually like about Him. If you can't they you ask the Holy Spirit to tell you to explore to you. The discipline of finding him satisfying. So the next time you pray, O Lord heal me of my illness and then you sing, Lord the biggest illness I ever had is sin and you already healed me of that. So therefore Lord, I have a lack of finances, I am not doing well in my job and then you pray, O Lord you are owner of the cattle of 10,000 hills, in You I am completely blessed. So everything you pray about, you go back to God and find Him satisfying, find Him the fulfilment to everything that you actually need. As long as the discipline of mind keep on going back to that then you discover Him as beautiful.

3. Seek It in the World

Psalms 27:4 (ESV) One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: 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 inquire in his temple.

The only way to seek is to seek it in the word of God, as you bathe yourself in the word of God, as you look at it and you will discover the dimensions of God's love on the pages of the Bible in the context of the history of Israel. How God deals with Israel and you see how beautiful God is by looking in the word.

4. Seeking Jesus Centrally

Psalms 27:7-10 (ESV) Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! 8 **You have said, "Seek my face."** My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." 9 Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! 10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the **Lord will take me in.**

In the first few verses here, seek my face. Second here, hide not your face, turn not your servant away, cast me not of forsake. There is a tension, God wants you, but you cannot come in. So, the tension is you have a desire of God, but you are unworthy. You want God, but you come into his temple, I am not worthy. There is a tension in that. So therefore, he goes into the temple. This is the same tension that you will see in Exodus 33. It is where when Moses comes to God and he tells God,

Exodus 33:18-20 (ESV) Moses said, "**Please show me your glory.**" 19 And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name

'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 20 But," he said, "**you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.**"

So on one hand, Moses says show me your face, show me your glory, God is very happy to do that. On the other hand, if I show you, you die. So there is a tension in it. You want God, but you want God you are going to die when you go near to God. It is like flying inside into the face of the sun and getting burnt. So therefore, what is the solution.

In the temple you have a standard of Ten Commandments, to which we must live but we always fail. On the other hand, there is blood that is poured down to make up the fact that you actually failed. There is justice and mercy, love, all combined into one. There is no picture of God, but the picture of God is his mercy and his love towards us. You see the things that he has done. That's why in John chapter 4 when the Samaritan woman talk to Jesus and then talking about true worship and he tells her

John 4:23-24 (ESV) But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

The fact is that worshipping in spirit and truth is in Jesus. The tabernacle is replaced. If you look at John chapter 1 verse 14,

John 1:14 (ESV) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

That means that Jesus is the tabernacle amongst us. If you look at the tabernacle, you will be looking at Jesus, because Jesus is the supreme sacrifice and the irony is in Isaiah 53

Isaiah 53:2-3 (ESV) 2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

If you look at Jesus in those days after he had been beaten half to the death, you would not find him beautiful. In fact, you would probably turn your face away from him, but the point is he gave up his beauty to make you beautiful. So, he became ugly and we became beautiful because we share now in the hope of glory because the glory was in his face. That's the beauty of it.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are **being transformed** into the same image from **one degree of glory to another**. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit

If we worship God. If we take time to behold God, if we take time to gaze upon him and experience him then gradually, we will become like what we worship. We will have the glory of God. He lost His glory, so you could gain His glory. We will have His glory and we are being changed. Jesus shows faithfulness. All the beauty in Jesus is slowly passed to us; Grace, unmerited favour, loyalty, love, honesty and integrity, all that because we are looking at the person who is the author of all that beauty. That beauty passes to us because he has given up his beauty for us.

5. Seek It Patiently

Psalms 27:13-14 (ESV) I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! 14 Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

Wait for the Lord because anything worth doing, being transformed you need to do it patiently, it doesn't come tomorrow. Transformation and experience of Jesus Christ just starts may be a couple of an hour or week, you sat aside to sit and look and gaze at the beauty of Christ. Then slowly you extend the time, but if you don't do it, you will not be transformed, but if you do it, it will come in time.

Allen Gardiner was the founder of the South American Mission Society. In 1851 he got on a ship to sail to start a mission field in Tierra del Fuego. They were met with a terrible storm. The ship capsized and he was left on an island with no food and no water and eventually he died without even setting his foot anywhere else to start a new mission which he wanted to. He died with a journal in his hand. The journal was damaged by water but it was still legible and they read his last entry. The last entry was

Psalms 34:10 (ESV) The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

The Lord didn't protect him, the ship sank, he starved to death, that is not very pleasant and there is not one hint of anger. This means that he must have had an experience of the beauty of God that is so satisfying that in the middle of a God forsaken desert island somewhere, he can still find that kind of fulfilment that became the last entry. He is overwhelmed by the goodness of God. That's how he died. In fact, in another journal entry he wrote these words.

"Grant O Lord, that we may be instrumental in commencing this great and blessed work; but should Thou see fit in Thy providence to hedge up our way, and that we should even languish and die here, I beseech Thee to raise up others and to send

forth labourers into this harvest. Let it be seen, for the manifestation of Thy Glory and Grace that nothing is too hard for Thee..."

Though I die, you will raise up. The Lord answered the prayer, the Lord raised up other people to bring the people of South America to know his son, Jesus Christ. True faith is the ability to look and be transformed by the beauty of Christ and when we do that we are going to be bulletproof. We are going to be able to go through the riggers and difficulties and pain of life, because you have a true experience of Christ.