

Psalm 27 27.07.25 St Andrews

Presenting the theme

One of the things we know about David, great King of Israel, the author of so many Psalms, is that he was a musician. As a young man, he was brought into King Saul's court to play music which calmed the troubled king.

Several passages in the Old Testament suggest that there was a strong relationship between prophets and music. For example: Elisha demanded a player of a stringed instrument as he spoke, or perhaps sang, his words of prophecy. This might explain why some of the books of the OT prophets are poetic in style. Perhaps they were originally sung or spoken to a musical accompaniment. Certainly, I find that it's easier to remember scriptures that have been set to music.

So, while we look at the book of Psalms as a collection of prayers and songs, we need also to note the prophetic aspect of these writings. Certainly, the writers of the New Testament interpreted the book of Psalms primarily as a prophetic book that points to the person, words and deeds of Jesus, the Messiah.

Prophecy has various aspects: it can reveal future events, or bring God's correction, or encouragement in a particular situation. It can also refer to the preaching of God's word. But basically, it is a way that God uses to speak but, of course, any speech that claims to be prophetic should be carefully weighed: Is it consistent with what we know of God's character and with His revealed word in scripture? Is there consensus among Spirit-filled believers that this is a word from the Lord? And, if it is a future prediction, does it happen?

I'm sure you find, as I do, that God often speaks to me, through His word, a message that I need to hear at a particular time. I have asked some people if they will share with us a verse from Psalms that God has used to speak to them at some time.

Me: Psalm 23 3 At a time of great fear, anxiety and distress – a song on a CD ; He restores my soul. Just that repeated brought great peace into my heart.

Colin

Jonathan

Hugh

Nomena

Sermon

Long story, short: Israel was a theocracy, governed by God through leaders called judges. The people nagged Judge Samuel for a king to be like the nations around them. God granted their request and gave them warnings and rules for the kings.

The first King to be anointed was Saul, who started off well, but eventually he broke the rules and God removed the anointing from him and sent Samuel off to anoint another king. David was the one God indicated. An ordinary lad who faithfully and bravely looked after his father's flocks. He loved the Lord and had great faith in Him.

David was anointed King, but Saul was still in place.

David slew the Philistine army's champion, making Israel victorious against the enemy, and he became very popular, especially with the women.

Saul was jealous because he knew God was no longer with him and he could see God's hand on David, so he made several attempts on David's life and David became a fugitive, living out in the wilderness areas and gathering supporters from his family and many discontents.

Saul pursued him relentlessly to kill him, but God kept David safe.

V. 1 – 3

I don't know whether David wrote this Psalm during his time on the run from King Saul, or whether he based it on those experiences, or whether later challenges to his life and position inspired it, but when he speaks of 'evil men advancing against him to devour his flesh, enemies and foes attacking him, armies besieging him and war breaking out against him', he was not speaking metaphorically or over-dramatising; this was his actual situation many times. What people now call – **his lived experience**.

In those fastnesses in the wild rocky places, David used his wits, trusted God and continued to honour God.

He even honoured the man who was determined to kill him, Saul, recognising that he was God's anointed King, even though God had removed that anointing and that he, David, was now the anointed king of Israel.

Still, he would not kill Saul, even though he had two clear opportunities. But he trusted that God would protect him and sort out the situation.

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?

As far as I'm aware, none of us faces physical attack as David did.

However, we do get attacked and sometimes feel ourselves besieged by circumstances, or other people, or by spiritual oppression and attack.

Sometimes, we feel in a dark place or we aren't sure of the way ahead. His word brings light into dark places. Sometimes, we might feel we are trapped, or in a situation we cannot get out of.

So, whatever challenges you are facing – or that someone you love is facing:

remembering the link between prophecy and music, as Kathryn plays, bring these situations to the Lord and, after a pause to bring these things to mind, we will speak out words of faith and confidence in the Lord. v1. Whom or what.

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom/what shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom/what shall I be afraid?

V4 – 6 ESV

‘One thing have I asked of the LORD’

David hungers for closeness to the LORD and, as well as asking, he determines to seek it.

Matt. 7 v 7 Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you.

There is an element of earnestness, effort, a desire that drives one. In Matthew's account the reward for this is that the Father will give good things and in Luke's account, the Father will give the Holy Spirit. Both texts refer to the generosity of a human father and say, ‘How much more will your Heavenly Father give?’

He is our ‘How-much-more Heavenly Father’.

So, was the answer to David's prayer that he could spend a congenial, cloistered life contemplating the Lord's goodness?

Absolutely not.

He fought battles and, by God's grace, he won.

He was a fugitive from Saul and in great danger,

He knew hunger and lived in caves.

He was responsible for 600 men plus women while running from Saul.

He lived on his wits but always sought the Lord's guidance in big decisions.

Then, when he became king, he still had battles to fight (and win by God's grace) plus the responsibility and problems of leading a family and a nation.

But what he learned as his father's shepherd boy, and in his battles on behalf of King Saul and then as a fugitive, was to seek to stay close to God.

Whatever the enemy – a lion after his sheep, or a jealous king after his life, or an enemy-tribe after his kingdom,

God was his stronghold. God would protect him and lift him up.

Lift him up – what is the significance of being high upon a rock?

Rock is stable.

A high rock would be a good vantage point for a man pursued or threatened by enemies, and it gives a good view of the surroundings for the way ahead.

What is our high rock, our vantage point?

Well, obviously, our feet must be firmly planted on the Rock who is Christ and His teachings, but also, as we stay close to Him – beholding Him in the sanctuary, we get an eternal view.

Paul and the other apostles model this in their letters and lives. They saw beyond the troubles and trials and difficulties of this world to the place beyond where the Lord of Glory dwells.

Romans 8 v 31 – 38

Col 3 v 1 – 4

Our lives are hidden with Christ in God.

To dwell, live, abide close to God. David wanted to focus his mind and meditate on the Lord in the sanctuary.

I think there is a sense here of community and communion. David could seek God and contemplate His beauty out in his hiding places in the wilderness, but he wants to be in the sanctuary.

We need both – to contemplate and worship the Lord in the secret place, but also to meet together with the common purpose of abiding in His presence and honouring Him with our praise and worship.

Notice how adoration and supplication go together in this Psalm.

We bring our requests to Him, and we praise joyfully and, hopefully melodiously, because of all He has done for us.

In the Psalms we see worship, supplication, proclamation, repentance, anxiety, lament, declaration, encouragement, Messianic prophecy and more, all threaded together on a golden chain of poetry and music.

V7 , 8

‘You have said, “Seek My face.” Apparently, the command to ‘seek’ is addressed to more than one person. A reference to gathering together to collectively seek the face of the Lord. The singer responds on behalf of all ‘Your face, Lord, do I seek.

v. 9

But then there seems to be a wobble; the confident faith of the first part of the Psalm deserts David. Perhaps he remembers his past sins; perhaps he sees that his heart and soul are not wholly set on the Lord, after all.

However, the Lord’s testimony of David is that he was a man who walked before God with integrity and uprightness (1 Kings 9 v 4), a man after God’s own heart. Even though he obviously was far from sinless (only the Lord Jesus fits that description), his heart was set on God.

Does that mean that sin doesn’t matter? That God has His favourites, and they can do what they like?

Absolutely not!

Sin has devastating consequences and cuts us off from God. Even when we have been saved and given new life in Him, sin will break our communion with God; it grieves the Holy Spirit.

But the way of restoration for us and for David is repentance; and David’s repentance was real and deep, as we see in several of his psalms.

However, as we saw last week in Psalm 25, we can sometimes remember the sins of our youth – and more recent sins, and even though we’re sure we repented of them and received forgiveness, we feel regret and remorse and wonder if we were really forgiven.

This is the time to recognise an attack of the evil one in your mind – put on the armour – helmet of salvation for your mind, the breastplate of righteousness for your heart – emotions, sense of identity – take up the shield of faith and speak out words of faith as your sword of the Spirit:

1John 1 v 9 ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ This is the Word of God and we choose to believe it, rather than enemy lies.

v.10 – 12 Even if those closest to us desert us; even if people spread false stories about us and slander us. Even if we are trolled on social media – for standing up for Christ and what is right. The Lord will still be our God and Father and He is our Defence.

V13, 14

Then in verses 13 and 14, David returns to voicing his trust in God. I wonder if this is an expression of his faith at that time in his twenties, when he was on the run. He knew he had been chosen by God to rule Israel; and yet, here he was hiding in the wilderness. Was it during those years that David spoke words of faith?

‘I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.’

When we are in wilderness times, and the promises we thought God had made to us seem far from fulfilment; when we have prayed for years and years and there is no answer, yet.

This is the time to speak out in faith the Word of God.

We might not know just what the goodness of the Lord will look like in our lives, or how He will fulfil His promises to us. But we can choose to believe that he will reveal His goodness to us.

We can, and should, say to ourselves and to others,

‘Wait for the LORD; Be strong, and let your heart take courage; Wait for the LORD.’