

Hello every one! Well, Feb. is almost gone and it will soon be March madness! Spring is almost here; so is Easter!
Hang in there everybody! The weather is changable but God is stable! He is always the same; He loves us very much!
Enjoy this week which He has given to you, no matter what happens, remember that God is good all the time; all the time God is GOOD!!! God bless and keep you; May He make His face to shine upon you and grant you His peace!
Pastor Don

"The Lord Is Our strength"

Psalm 27

Feb. 24, 2013

An American man was walking down street in Belfast, Ireland. He was grabbed from behind and a knife is put to his throat. The assailant said quick laddy, tell me if ye protestant or be ye Catholic? The American said well actually sir, I'm a Jew. To which the assailant responded Aye, aren't I the luckiest Muslim all of Ireland!

The 3 year old little girl was awakened by the thunder storm and ran to her parent's room. Mommy I'm scared, can I sleep with you and daddy? No the mother replied. Go back to your bed. God will be there with you. In that case said the little girl, why don't I stay here with daddy and you can go in there with God?

Everyone is afraid of something. Fear of the unknown stops a lot of people from being all that they can be for God. A Persian general would always give his captives a choice; they could face the firing squad or choose what was behind this big black door. Most chose to face the firing squad. Only a few ever choose the door. Too bad, behind it was freedom.

A traveler had to cross a wide, well frozen river. All the local people said it was plenty safe. It was thoroughly frozen. But the traveler was still hesitant. Finally he crawled out on the ice and slowly began crawling across to the other side. About half way there, he was almost run over by a wagon filled with iron ore. The wagon was pulled by 6 horses and filled with ore yet it did not create even the slightest hint of a crack in the ice. Their passing caused the man to feel a little foolish, so he got up and finished walking across.

How often do we doubt God's word? God's word can not fail. Yet how often do we hesitate and delay obeying based on some fear? God will protect us if we are obedient to Him. Scottish preacher John McNeill relates this story from his childhood. He stayed in town too long and it was getting dark. It was 6 miles back to his home down a lonely sometimes dangerous road. It was very dark and John was very afraid. Suddenly he heard a familiar voice. It was his father. They walked home together. John ads "Many a time since when things have been getting very black and

gloomy around me I have heard a voice greater than any earthly father cry
'fear not for I am with thee.'"

Certain tribes of American Indians had a unique way of preparing young braves for man hood. On the night of night 13th birthday, they were blindfolded and taken deep into the woods where they were unblindfolded and left all alone for the night. They have been trained in hunting, fishing, and self defense, now it was time to test them. Most of these young men spent the night in fear, waiting to be devoured by some wild creature. But when the sun rose the next morning, they saw beautiful trees, flowers, a path way and most importantly, his father stranding guard over him just a few feet away. That is the way God is; He is standing guard over us just a few feet away. Do we trust Him?

Are we confident enough in him to obey him and not shirk our duty based on some fear either real or imagined? Do we truly believe that God is with us so we need not fear?

What rules our lives this morning; fear or faith? (Pray)

Psalm 27 is a psalm of trust. David, who is described as a man after God's own heart, is telling us just how much he truly trusts God. How much do we trust God?

[vs.1] David describes God as his light & his salvation. In the bible, light equals goodness and darkness equals evil. Used together, the words light and salvation equal saving light. Jesus is the saving light. He not only gives us eternal life; He also gives us a purpose in this life. With Jesus in our hearts, we truly have nothing to fear. So David is telling us not to fear. Christians have nothing to fear because God is our strength; He is our refuge. He is our rock, the strength of our life. Paul tells us in Phil. 4:13 that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. So what shall we fear?

Most people have a fear of the unknown. We are afraid of what we can't see or don't know about. What are we afraid of this morning? Fear also comes from a feeling of helplessness or vulnerability. What makes us feel helpless or vulnerable today? We are not helpless; Jesus is our help. We are not vulnerable; God is our strength. Do we trust them this morning? God is our light. Light drives away our fears. God is our salvation. He sent Jesus to die for our sins. If we trust Him, we have nothing to fear. Do we believe He is our strength, our light and our salvation?

[Vs. 2-3] David totally trusted God. He was confident of God's protection. With the phrase eat up my flesh; David is describing his

enemies as ravenous wolves who seek to devour him. God caused his enemies to stumble and fall. This shows a thorough defeat of David's enemies by God's protective hand. When David was surrounded by an army of enemies, or in a war, he had learned to trust God. God's protective hands held David; and he knew he was safe in those hands. Whose hands are protecting us? Are we safe in the hands of God? Or are we fighting our own battles, trusting our own weak arms of flesh?

[Read vs. 4] David's one over whelming desire is to be in God's house. He loves God and wants to spend every waking moment with him. He wants to behold the beauty of God and learn of him. What do we want? What is our one over whelming desire?

This does not mean that David wants to be a priest, although he would be happy doing that. He is not literally talking about living in the church. David is talking about spiritually dwelling in God's house. He is talking about spending time with God.

Living each day in God's presents. He is talking about having a relationship with God. Christians have that relationship. Christianity is a relationship with Jesus. He lives in our hearts. He dwells in us! This relationship helps us to behold the beauty of God. This is His pleasant nature. The beauty of God is His holiness. Christians should be holy for God is Holy. Are we holy? Do we strive for holiness?

By living in God's house we are taught by Him, we inquire in his temple. Reading God's word keeps us inquiring as to his will for us. It keeps us dwelling in his house.

How is our bible study this morning? What is the 1 thing that we desire of God? Paul tells us his in Phil. 3:13-14 "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus". Apprehended means to lay hold of. Paul is telling us even he was not the perfect Christian, but he was striving towards that perfection. He was trying hold on to Jesus, even though he may not totally understand everything about Him. Do we try to hold on to Jesus? Reading his word daily will help us to do that. Paul shares his secret to living a Christian life. He does one thing; he forgets what is past and reaches forward to those things which are ahead. He presses toward the goal. What is that goal? To be like Christ!

If we are going to be like Christ, we must know Him; if we are going to know Him; we must read his word. How can you be like some one if you don't know them? Forgetting the past is the only way to reach for the future. We can't undo our mistakes & we can't live on past victories. We must focus on Jesus all the time. What is our focus today?

[Read 5-6] God will protect us in times of trouble. He will hide us in his pavilion, a place of shelter. He will hide us in his tabernacle, a place of worship. He will set us high upon a rock, the rock of salvation Jesus Christ.

Here we are dwelling in God's house again. God's house offers protection to those who love Him. He will lift them up above their enemies and they will offer sacrifices of joy and sing songs of praise to God. All Christians are ministers of Jesus Christ. We are all his priests. Old Testament Priests offered sacrifices for the people's sin. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice, once for all sin. Therefore we ministers or priests no longer have to offer sacrifices for sin. Instead we need to offer sacrifices of praise. Hebrews 13:15 tells us to "Continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." We need to stay in the presence of God all the time, not just come to him when we are in trouble. David sought God's face everyday, do we?

[Read 7] This is David asking God to be merciful to him and answer his prayers. If we pray and believe, God will answer our prayers. Especially if we, like David are constantly seeking His face and are people after God's own heart. What are we after today?

[Read 8-10] David answers God with a hearty yes when God commands him to seek His face. Do we? Then David asks God not to hide from him or reject him. He acknowledges God as his help and salvation. God is there when everyone else failed him or abandoned him. God is also there for us today when everyone else abandons or fails us. Too many people today have experienced being abandoned by one or both parents. Too many have been abused. God is our perfect parent. He is our loving heavenly Father. He is there for us when our parents let us down. He will never let us down. He might not give us what we want, but he will provide for us what we need and what is best for us. What we need most is His love, which he gives to us unconditionally. Are we willing to accept it? Are

we willing to return it? Are we willing to share it?

[Read 11] David asks God to teach him Godly living. We need to ask God for the same thing today. We are to be a reflection of Jesus for the entire world to see. The old King James Version uses the word plain where the new king James uses the word smooth. Smooth good give us a wrong impression. Christianity is not a smooth path, it is a straight one. Satan makes sure the path always has a few bumps in it. The new living translation uses the word right to describe the path Christians are to walk. Are we walking on the right path this morning? The path that follows in Jesus' footsteps? It is important to be on the right path

because we are being watched by our enemies. They are waiting for us to make a mistake, waiting for us to slip and fall. That is why we like David must totally depend upon God every day of our lives. We must constantly seek his face. We must dwell in his house every day of our lives. We must stay on the straight and narrow path.

[Read 12-13] David is asking for God's protection as his enemies have conspired against him. They have false witnesses and are prepared to do David bodily harm. But David is confident that God will protect and deliver him. Do we trust God when people, things, and life in general seem to be against us? Are we like David confident that God will protect us and that we will see the goodness of the LORD in this lifetime?

Being a good Christian means we must be patient and wait upon the LORD.
[14]

Waiting on the LORD means to demonstrate confident expectations. Wait may also be translated hope. Hoping in God is also waiting confidently on Him. To hope in God is to wait for his time and his action. In Psalm 40:4 David says blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust. Psalm 40:1-2 "I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined His ear to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps."

Isaiah 40:31 "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Are we waiting upon the lord today? Is he our hope? Do we trust Him? Are we seeking his face? Do we wish to dwell in his house for ever?

We all have fears. We all need Jesus to calm those fears. He will if we let him. Faith over comes fear. Hugh Black said the fear of God kills all other fears. George MacDonald said fear is faithlessness. An old saying goes like this; fear knocked at the door, faith answered, no one was there.

F.D.R. once told us that the only thing we have to fear is fear it self. Do we have fear this morning or do we have faith?

Henry Emerson Fosdick said "Fear imprisons, faith liberates; fear paralyzes, faith empowers; fear disheartens, faith encourages; fear sickens, faith heals; fear makes useless faith makes serviceable; and

most of all fear puts hopelessness at the heart of life, while faith rejoices in it's God."

What are we afraid of today? Are we facing it alone or have we asked God to help us?

Are we confidently waiting on his help?

The LORD is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The lord is the strength of my life of whom shall I be afraid? Amen! Let's pray!