

## **A Chronicle of Redemption**

Chapter 14: This One Thing

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### **CHAPTER 14: THIS ONE THING** **Psalm 27**

Psalm 27 is our text. So, if you would, take your Bibles and turn with me to Psalm 27. As you're turning there, let me just say thank you for being a congregation that loves the Word of God. So, it's a privilege, an honor, really, just to serve the people with the Word of God, to feed the people with the Word of God who are so hungry for it. So, I look forward to what we're going to see in the text this morning in Psalm 27.

We've heard it read. We have prayed, and really, I just want to call your attention to that one verse there in verse 4, as we'll look at the broader Psalm up here in just a few moments, but I just wanted to read together this, Psalm 27:4, where David says, "*One thing I have 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...*" or to meditate "*...in his temple.*"

Some of you are familiar with Matt Chandler. He's the lead pastor of The Village Church in Texas. He's 35 years old. He has a wife and three young children, but he also has recently been diagnosed with brain cancer, and a very serious form of brain cancer. His prognosis is uncertain. He doesn't know if he has a few years or shorter or maybe perhaps longer, but this week a number of us heard him speak at a conference called Together for the Gospel in Louisville, and he said something at that conference that really resonated with me, and I think would resonate with all of us, and really resonates with the text here.

He was speaking about how, as he had come to this church and the church had grown, he realized over time that the church that he pastored was unprepared...ill-prepared to suffer. They were a young congregation. They didn't really have those kind of experiences often, but when they came, he realized that they were not quite prepared to suffer. So, he began, he said, to preach on suffering. Whenever the text allowed, whenever there were any indication, whenever any application regarding suffering was in the text, he would point it out for the people.

So, he talked about the sovereignty of God in suffering. He talked about the goodness of God in suffering, the goodness for us in conforming us into the image of Christ, but then, he said this...he said, "Here's where the mercy of God becomes overwhelming to me. All this while I thought I was getting them ready to suffer, it never occurred to me that God was getting me ready." He said, "I've always heard that Jesus is enough; Jesus is the goal; Jesus is what we are after, and everything in me is now saying, 'Yes, He is.'"

I want to be able to say that. I want to be able to say that my affections for Christ are greater than anything else in this world, that if I were to lose everything in a Job-like calamity, I want to be able to say with Job, "*Even though he slay me, yet will I trust him.*" That Jesus is, as Matt Chandler said, Jesus is enough, that Jesus is the goal, that Jesus is what we are after. I think that this psalm, in particular...in its context rightly understood...I think this psalm points us in that direction.

In other words, it prepares us. Either today or in the days ahead, it prepares us for suffering. How do we respond? Do we respond like Job's friends or do we respond like Job? Do we have a confident assertion that all else...that all else may fail, that Christ is enough, that He is sufficient, that He is good and that He is, indeed, the goal of it all?

## **The Brutal Assessment**

### **Of David ...**

We could look at this Psalm in a number of ways. I just divided it up into three easy divisions: a brutal assessment, a single-minded appeal, and finally, a confident assertion. I wanted to look and see how it is that David, in the context of suffering, points us to verse 4. Seeking one thing above all else with God being the goal. God being our satisfaction. Notice how he begins, first, with a brutal assessment. David just simply lays out what life is like, in particular, what his life is like.

Now, we don't know the exact background for David here. There are a number of contexts that would fit exactly what David is speaking about here. We know, for example, that David was rejected by his son. So, there was a revolt even. So, he is chased, and he's fleeing from Absalom at particular times, but more than likely, the context here in Psalm 27, the background for Psalm 27 is the time between David's anointing as king and his public installation as king.

You remember last week we looked at the story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. However, before you get to 1 Samuel 17, you have 1 Samuel 15 and 16. In 1 Samuel 15, you'll remember that Saul was the king of Israel. He was the tall king. He was greater than all others in the nation. Saul, though, in 1 Samuel 15 offers unauthorized sacrifice before the Lord.

So, you remember Samuel confronts Saul about it, and he says to obey is better than what? To sacrifice. He tells, informs Saul that he has been on this day rejected as king over Israel. The Spirit departs from Saul. In that same period of time, as that is going on, Samuel also makes his way down to the house of Jesse, and you remember, they bring all of the sons of Jesse before Samuel. He says, "No, not this one, not this one. Do you have any other sons?" He says, "Yeah, I've got one, but it couldn't be him. He's out in the field. Don't even worry about it." Samuel says, "Let's all stay standing and bring him before us and let us see." So, they bring in this young man named David, and Samuel anoints him as king over Israel, and the text says that the Spirit of God came upon David. In the very next verse, it says that the Spirit of God departed from Saul.

Now, it's important to remember, though, that just because David is anointed as king, just because he is recognized by the prophet as king, the installation, the inauguration is not yet. So, we then proceed into 1 Samuel 17, just as we read last week, where David goes out, and he fights Goliath where Saul should have, but did not. David immediately receives the adulation of the people. You remember they chant for David. They say, "Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands."

So, Saul is angry, and Saul begins to persecute David. So, from 1 Samuel 18 all the way to the end of 1 Samuel it kind of reads like an episode of *Roadrunner*. You know what I mean? David is constantly on the run, and he is constantly outwitting Saul at every single turn. He has opportunities to kill him, but he doesn't. He's in caves; he's on the run; he's among

enemies. He's everywhere. He's even in the house of Saul, but two times while he's in the house of Saul in 1 Samuel, we are told that Saul tries to pin him to the wall with a spear. I mean, how would you like that, you know? It's 11:00 PM. You're thinking, "I want to go get something out of the refrigerator. You know, I just want a midnight snack." You're walking, and somebody tries to pin you to the wall with a spear. It's just not hospitality.

However, he's on the run all the way. In fact, I think we have really a good glimpse of just the mindset. I think this really informs this psalm. In fact, it may be the very context out of which David writes. I want you to look back in 1 Samuel 21. 1 Samuel 21, the very end, and then we're going to look at the beginning of 22. There is some language there in that text that shows up also in this Psalm 27 that indicates that, maybe, this is the precise background out of which David writes.

Look at 1 Samuel 21:10-13. "*And David rose and fled that day from Saul...*" Again, he's on the run from Saul.

*And he went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another of him in dances, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands?'" And David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. So he changed his behavior before them and pretended to be insane in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let spittle run down his beard.*

That's an attractive picture, isn't it?

I mean, that seems like a king, right, that's anointed king of Israel? However, it gets even better. Look in the next chapter. 1 Samuel 22:1: "*David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam.*" I love this verse. "*And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became captain over them.*" I mean, that's the kind of people you want on your team, right? I want the people that owe all their money. I want the people that are in complete distress. People that are insane. That's who I want.

Before we go on, just as a side note. David, by the way, over and over is a type of Christ...pointing us to Christ...you see there those people that gather around him, people in distress, people in debt, everyone who was bitter in soul, they gathered to him in the same way that those of us who are bitter in soul, those of us who are in debt, enslaved to sin, those of us who are in absolute distress, we gather to Jesus who is the captain of our soul.

This is really the life of David, and it's out of this kind of context where he has the promises of the kingdom, but he does not yet enjoy the privileges of the kingdom. It's out of this kind of context that David writes Psalm 27. I want to show you just very briefly...it's fairly obvious as you work through the text, and we could cite more examples...but some of the things that David sees. First of all, David sees devastation in verse 10. David sees devastation in verse 10.

He says, "*For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in.*" Now, we don't know if, indeed, his father and mother had literally forsaken him, if this is hyperbole, if this is an exaggeration, but the point is this: Whether real or imagined, that those that are absolutely the closest to him, those that gave him life...are giving him life, in a sense...these people have betrayed him.

Not only does he see devastation though. He sees desertion. Look down in verse 12. He says, *"Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence."* Those friends that were closest to him, the ones that had the most access, the ones that, at one point, perhaps had stood up for David, had fought for David, had been loyal to David, now they turn upon him.

He sees devastation, he sees desertion, but he also sees danger. Look back in the beginning of the psalm, verses 2 and 3. He says, *"When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh..."* Listen to the brutality of the language. He says, "Evildoers assail me. They eat up my flesh. My adversaries and my foes, my enemies." He says, *"Though an army..."* in verse 3, *"An army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise against me, yet I will be confident."*

You remember last week when we looked at the story of David and Goliath. Do you remember the token that was taken? Jesse says, "Bring me back a token, you know, from the battlefield." David says, "Okay. I'll do that." So, he brings back the head of Goliath. A small token of appreciation. It's just a reminder that, you know, we live in a day of peaceful transitions. So, we have one president, and then we have another president. We have one Congress, and then we have another Congress. The way that they swapped leaders, the way that they progressed was from beheading, from decapitation, from killing one leader to establishing another.

David is not just exaggerating in these verses, in particular. David faces the real threat of death that they will impale him upon a stick, that they will sever his head from his body. I think this is where it really helps us as we come to see that it's in the midst of this kind of brutality, this kind of just honesty, that we see the beauty of the psalms.

You know, the psalms don't offer us a sanitized version of life. It's not a disinfected picture of reality. It's just honest. It's just brutally honest. Yes, there are triumphs; yes, there are joys; yes, there are times when we experience great victory, but there are also times of great despair. There are times of depression. There are times when the darkness will not lift.

### **Of believers ...**

It's what David saw in his life, and it's what we see in our world. That we live in a world that is irretrievably broken and fallen apart from the work of Christ. So, what do we see in our world? We see, first, conflict in our lives. In John 15:20, Jesus said, *"Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you."* Jesus said, "Suffering is a reality, especially for believers."

If Jesus the Master suffers, then it's a truth, it's a guarantee that the servants who are lesser than the Master, they will also suffer. We see conflict in our lives. We also see sin in the world. We see sin in the world. I think this is one of the greatest benefits of traveling through the Word all year, is it not? We see from Genesis, as we have progressed all the way through 1 Samuel and on, we see that the whole world lies under the curse of God.

I mean, we see just the fallenness on every single page. If you just think about Genesis 2, 3, all the way through 11. We see, for example, that the family is fallen. That husbands are fallen. They desire to rule harshly over their wives. That wives are fallen, and they desire to establish authority over their husbands. We see that children are fallen, so immediately after the Fall, we see a brother killing a brother. Not only that families are fallen, but childbearing is fallen. That what was to be a joy is now a great difficulty. I think that some would say, "Amen." I don't know for sure, but joy becomes pain the same way with work,

what was intended to be a good thing, what was intended to be a fulfilling thing. That before the Fall, we see that the earth yields forth its harvest. It yields forth fruit for Adam as he toils the ground, but after the Fall, we see that it brings forth thorns and thistles and that he shall earn his living from the sweat of his brow. Where once he was to have dominion over the ground...in other words, the ground was to be under him...now, in death the ground is over him.

We see that the family is fallen. We see that work, that childbearing is fallen. We see that even in Genesis 6, early on that the entire society, the whole fabric of humanity is fallen in individuals and collectively. Genesis 6:5: "*The LORD saw the wickedness of man was in great in the earth, and that every intention...*" listen to this. "*That every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" Everything. Everything is evil; everything is wicked.

It especially translates into religion that is fallen as well. So, we see after the story of Noah and the ark and the covenant that God establishes, that we come into the land of Babel, and there they establish a tower. It is a man-made form of religion. They say, "*Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top to the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.*" No mention whatsoever of God.

From individuals to family to societies to religion. Everything is fallen, which really leads us to that third reality, that we see an adversary in Scripture. There is more that is going on than our eyes can behold. In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter warns them. He says, "*Be sober-minded; be watchful.*" "*Be sober-minded; be watchful.*" Why does he say that? What occasions him to warn the people this? "*Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*" There is a real adversary, though we do not see him with our eyes. There is a lion that seeks to destroy you, to tear you limb from limb.

John said, "*The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*" The point of all that is this: that we inhabit a thoroughly and completely fallen world in every way imaginable. I think that this is something that we need to be reminded of because we live, oftentimes, compared to the world especially. We live in nice houses, drive nice cars, we go to nice jobs, and we work with nice people, and we go back home to our nice family. We can be lulled into sleep, and we can forget the fact that we live in a radically fallen world from the smallest atom to the greatest cosmic reality. Everything is fallen.

Paul says that the whole world groans out awaiting redemption. The Bible reminds us of this kind of world. That we live in a world of tears and bitterness and depression and disappointment and despair. That we live in a world of divorce and adultery. We live in a world of debilitating diseases and terminal diagnoses. We live in a world of death and caskets and tombs, and even if our experience somewhat lags behind those realities, even if we do not presently experience those kinds of things, it will not be forever.

To live is to suffer. One day, all of us, whether now, next year, next decade or maybe toward the end of our life or perhaps the whole way through. Jesus said, "*The servant is not greater than his master.*" To live is to suffer. I think that reality that David lays out...verses 2, 3, 10 and 12...that fallen reality that David lays out for us forms the background, really pushes the question forward that I think that this psalm answers, and that is simply this: "In light of that (suffering in this fallen world), how do we navigate this fallen world?"

## A Singular Appeal

How do you and I navigate a world in which fallenness exists, again, from the smallest to the greatest? How do we navigate it, in particular, in such a way that we come out with the confession that David utters in verse 4? Well, I think that David gives us a clue there in verse 4. He gives us not only the brutality of it all, a brutal assessment, he follows that up really with his strategy. How's he going to deal with this kind of world? How are you going to deal with this kind of world? David puts before us a single-minded appeal. He puts before us a single-minded appeal. I just want to point out a number of aspects of this appeal.

### **The shock of the appeal ...**

Notice, first, the shock of the appeal. David does not ask first for deliverance. David doesn't ask first for deliverance. That's not what we expect. I mean, think about it. Go back to the top of it. It says,

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

I mean, can you imagine? Place yourself into David's circumstances. Literally, there is an army encamped about you, and, yes, they'll be glad to kill all the people that are with you, but they desire, more than anything, your head on a platter. I mean, do you really believe if you were there, and you're in the middle of that, and there's people around you ready to kill you, do you really think that you would say, "You know, I think the temple would be nice? I mean, that would be fun. That would be a great place to go."

No. You would say, "First thing's first, David. Get out of the circumstance, escape what you're doing. Then, you can think about the temple." You see, that's what gives this entire Psalm the shock. It's what gives it the force. It's what gives really gives it the impetus that we see in the rest of the text. David does not ask first for deliverance. David asked first for God. Verse 4, "One thing I have asked of the Lord: safety." "One thing I have asked of the Lord: deliverance." No. "*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...*"

David, in our language, simply is saying, "I want to experience the presence of God. I want to dwell with God. I want to be with God." Now, in our new covenant, New Testament experience, that may seem a little strange, but for David who lived under the old covenant, it's not strange at all. In fact, God, in the Old Testament has, as it were, a mailing address. God on the earth lives in the tabernacle and later in the temple. When Moses wanted to meet with God, where did he go? He didn't go outside the camp; he went to the tabernacle.

God filled the tabernacle; He filled the temple with His very own presence, and David's confession is, "What I want above all things in this life, more than safety, more than my life...what I want is to dwell and be with God." I want to be very careful here. I want you to understand I'm not saying that we should never appeal directly to God, that we should not immediately cry out to God. When there is some crisis in our life, whether it's a diagnosis, whether it's something that we did not foresee, whether it is something that is just lingering, I'm not saying that we don't just immediately, instinctively cry out to God.

Let me give you an example maybe that illustrates what I'm saying. The other night I woke up about 3:00 AM, and I had just a splitting headache. So, I went into the kitchen, I got some Ibuprofen, I went back and I laid down, and I just couldn't get any relief it seemed. So, I was laying there. I laid there for maybe 10, 20, 30 minutes or something like that, and again, just pounding headache. So, I did what I think was natural. I just cried out to God. I said, "God, would you please heal me. God, just take this away."

Now, was I wrong to do that? No. I don't think, in other words, that we need or have to vocalize this verse, verse 4, "*One thing I have asked of the LORD, that will I seek after...*" before we can ask anything of God. You know, have you ever been, for example, in a car wreck that you saw coming, you know, and you're sitting there, and maybe you see this person is not stopping behind you, or they're not stopping on the side of you, or they don't see you, and they're coming over to your lane; you just know that it's about to happen. I'm not saying that you need to do this, "One thing I've asked the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. Please don't let that car hit me."

You know, I think there's everything right about an immediacy of an instinctual, "God, would you deliver me? Would you please help me?" There's everything right about appealing to God. I think the point is this though: It's not about the first words that we utter. It is about the disposition of our hearts. To go back to the headache illustration, I don't think that it's wrong to call out to God in crisis, but if that's the only time that I cry out to God, then something is wrong.

If I only call out to God in times of distress, in times of despair...if I only call out to God when I need Him, I think that that misses the point. In fact, I know that it misses the point of being saved because the point of being saved is not just that we experience deliverance. Yes, that is true. We never diminish that, and we never separate it in that hard and sharp fashion. We praise God that He saved us, that we were headed for hell, that He interposed the precious blood of His own son, that He redeemed us from our sins, and that He promises us heaven. We praise God for that.

However, that's not all. It's not just that we get saved; we get God. John Piper wrote a book, and the title sort of says it all. He says, "*God is the Gospel*". In other words, we get saved, and we get God. We get to know Him. That's the point, isn't it? Do we not see that over and over in Scripture? I want you to jot these Scripture references down out beside this point. John 17:3: this is Jesus praying...high priestly prayer. Listen to what He says. "*This is eternal life...*" Jesus says, "*This is eternal life...*" We might expect Him to say that someone would never die, that they get to go to heaven. That's eternal life. However, Jesus doesn't say that at all. Jesus says, "*This is eternal life, that they know you...that they know you...the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*"

What is eternal life, brothers and sisters? What is eternal life? It is to know God, and we get that now. Jesus said, "*Whoever believes in me, he has passed...*" what? "*...from death unto life.*" Even now we know God. Same thing that Paul cries out in Philippians. Write this verse down. Philippians 3:7-8. It's interesting that David has this one thing. Really, you know, enormously important figure in the Old Testament, and he gives this singular appeal. It's the only place he does it, in Psalm 27:4. Paul...enormously important in the New Testament...also has one thing in verses 7 and 8. He says, "*Whatever gain I had, I counted it as loss for the sake of Christ.*" "I had advancement; I had employment; I had a name; I had a reputation; I had knowledge; I had zeal; I had all the affection of my brothers and sisters in the Jewish faith." He said, "I had it all, but..." he said, "*I count it all as loss.*" He

said, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

Colossians 3:3-4 says essentially the same thing. He said, "You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Then, I love the way that Paul phrases it in verse 4. "When Christ who is your life appears...when Christ who is your life appears." Your life is not your job. It's not your family. It's not anything else in this world. "Your life," he says, "is Christ."

We see it even at the end of the book, do we not? It's really the climax of the entire Bible. Not just the book of Revelation, but by God's providence, it's the climax of the whole Scripture in Revelation 21:1 all the way down through verse 4 where we read, John says, "I saw a new heaven and new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying..." and here is it. This is the point. He said, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

### **The benefits of the appeal ...**

What was lost in the garden, the very presence of God, is restored in Christ, and it is perfected and fulfilled and realized completely in heaven: that we will dwell with God. Now, I want to bring it back to this context. I want to bring it back to Psalm 27. How does this kind of appeal...why does this kind of appeal make sense in the context of suffering? Notice the benefits of the appeal. First of all...first, that God is absolutely sovereign. David has a recognition here in verse 4 that God is absolutely sovereign. He is a rock upon which David can build his life. Though they kill him, though they slay him, though they take his head off, God is absolutely sovereign. We see that in verse 4, do we not? Look at the number of mentions of "Lord." Every single part of it. He says, in the first part, "I asked of the LORD." The second part, "That I may dwell in the house of the LORD." Third part, "That I gaze upon the beauty of..." who? "Of the LORD." You see it? Three times: "Lord," "Lord," "Lord."

It's not just in verse 4. In fact, if you just travel with me down through this Psalm with your eyes. Look in verse 1. He mentioned the "Lord" twice. In verse 6, "Lord." In verse 7, "Lord." In verse 8, "Lord." Verse 10, "Lord." Verse 11, "Lord." Thirteen, "Lord." Fourteen, "Lord" two times. Not just that there's "Lord" all throughout. It's the fact that David begins the entire Psalm with the Lord, and he ends the entire Psalm with that expression, "the Lord." It's not just even repetition throughout front and end. It is also the very sections, verses 1 through 6, "Lord" begins, "Lord" ends. Verse 7, "Lord" begins. Verse 14, "Lord" ends.

I think David is trying to tell us something. I think he's trying to remind himself and us that God is absolutely sovereign. The point is it's not that the enemies are not formidable; they are. It's not that David is not terrified. He is. It's just that in comparison with God, his enemies are accounted as nothing. It's just that knowing that God is the sovereign God of the universe, David is absolutely certain that his enemies do not hold his fate. God holds his fate.

I think in the midst of despair, preparing for it or in the midst of it, we must have the settled confidence that not a single hair of our head falls to the ground unless the Lord ordains it. You see, that's a strong statement, and I think the witness of Scripture. I know the witness of Scripture is that there are no surprises in heaven. There is nothing that takes God off guard. There is never a single time when God is scrambling to respond to something in your life.

God is absolutely sovereign. Indeed, Ephesians 1:11 speaks to, God ordains every single thing, great and small, that happens in the universe. This is a precious truth to David and it is a precious truth to us. It is one which helps us to lay our heads on the pillow every night, knowing that nothing is out of God's control, that there is nothing that God does not know, nothing that God has not planned. David found confidence in that, that God is absolutely sovereign, but also that God is incomparably beautiful. David rested in the fact that God is absolutely sovereign. He is incomparably beautiful.

Look what he says in verse 4. Why does David want to dwell in the house of the Lord? In the midst of crisis, in the midst of difficulty, in the midst of all the things going wrong in his life, despair and depression, why does he want to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life? He tells us at the end to, "*Gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire or meditate in his temple.*"

I think David has something like this in mind. As we read through the book of Exodus, we saw all those chapters detailing the construction of the tabernacle. You remember those chapters, how detailed, how intentional everything was in the construction of the tabernacle? Can you imagine David as he envisions himself walking into the tabernacle? We know that it was extremely dark. The curtains were extremely heavy upon the sides, so what would give light to the tabernacle would be the candlesticks.

So, as David would walk in, he would just feel the darkness, feel even the experience that he knew of the enemies surrounding him. He would know the darkness, but he would see the light, and he would be reminded that God...indeed, verse 1...He "*is my light and my salvation.*" He would see the table of the presence of the bread, and he would see a God who provides for His people. He would see the altar, and he would see a God who cleanses us from all of our sins. He would see the veil, which would remind him that God is a God who is holy and righteous and just. He would know behind the veil that there was an ark and on the top of that ark there was the place of atonement. He would know that there is a God who saves, a God who delivers, a God who is merciful and gracious. He would see these things in the tabernacle, but brothers and sisters, this is where it gets so good for us. What David only saw in shadows, we now see in full in Christ.

We do not see in part. We do not see shadowy figures, as Hebrew speaks to, but we see Jesus Christ. We see Jesus who is the image of the invisible God, and that makes all the difference in times of distress, in times of difficulty, in times of despair, that all in our lives may go by the wayside, but Christ will not. Though we may lose our health, or we may lose our wealth, or we may lose our family; we may lose our very own lives, but we still have Jesus, and because He is incomparably beautiful, He is enough, and He is sufficient for everything we need. That He is unparalleled. Do you hear that? He is unparalleled in glory and greatness. By His own words, Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life.*" In John, He said, "*I am the light of the world. I am the door. I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life.*" He said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the true vine.*"

We know Jesus who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the firstborn from the dead, and thus, He is sufficient for everything. Beyond that, it begs the question: why would we ever affix our affections to things that we may lose, that we will lose? Why not have our affections pointed to Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forever?

### **The relevance of the appeal ...**

David saw the benefits of the appeal, but he also leads us into the relevance of the appeal. You know, it's one thing to read about a king long ago. It's another to examine our own

souls, to ask the question: "What is our one thing?" Or to phrase it another way, "Do we find God merely useful or do we also find God beautiful? Do we want God, or do we just want the things that God can give us?" To answer that question, we just have to ask our self what is uppermost in our affections? What is it that I want more than anything?

When it's just me, and I lay down at night, what is it that my mind drifts to? What is it that I meditate upon? What is it that I think about? What is it that I plan about? What is it that I dream about? What is it that I wish for? What is it that I long for more than anything else in all the world? What is it that brings me the most joy, the most satisfaction? I want to submit to you that that must be Jesus, that He must be our one thing. Anything else, the Bible says, is nothing but idolatry. Not only is it idolatry, but in the context of this psalm, it will lead to nothing but despair, nothing but depression, nothing but anxiety. He must be our one thing.

## **Our Confident Assertion**

I want to ask you a question: How do we know if we make that kind of confession that we're going to receive what we ask? I mean, can you imagine the disappointment? I want one thing, but then God seems far; there seems to be a disconnect. It seems impossible to even want God, to want Him more than anything else and be denied having that one thing.

You know, David doesn't lead us to that conclusion. David offers us a confident assertion. David says in verses 13 and 14, "*I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD.*" David says in verse 4, "I want to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord." He says in verse 13, "I'm confident that I'm going to do it." It begs the question, "How did David know that?" How did David have the assurance that he would have that one thing? It almost seems that David is just naming it and claiming it. I mean, is he just naïve or he is simplistic? What is it? I think it's much more profound than that. David has been promised the kingdom. He has been anointed, even though the circumstances say otherwise.

Even though, as we said just a little while ago, that he has the promise of the kingdom, but not the privileges of the kingdom yet. Even though everything else tells him that it's not really true, he brings back the words that we read in Joshua 1, "*Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage.*" It's a reminder to David. They were outside the Promised Land. God had promised them the Promised Land, and David now writes from that very Promised Land that God is faithful. It's a reminder that we obtain our one thing, not based on naïve predictions, rather we obtain our one thing based on rock solid promises. You say, "What promises do you have in mind? What do you mean by that? How do we know that if we want one thing, that we will actually get that one thing? If we want Christ above all, how do we know that we will get it? If we want the presence of God, how do we know that we will get it?"

Simply this way: One day on a cross the perfect Son of God who wanted nothing other than to do the will of His father, who is the living embodiment of Psalm 27:4...seeking after the Lord, one thing above all...that perfect Son of God hung on a cross and cried out, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.*" Signifying to us that, at that moment, God turned His back upon Jesus so that He would never turn His face away from us.

How do you know? I want God. I want the presence of God. I want to be with God. How do we know that we will never, ever be denied? We know one way. Not by anything that we

have done, but by everything He has done. So, Romans 5:1 says that we boldly enter into the throne room of God, that we have peace with God, that we have access with God or, as Paul puts it later in that book in Romans 8, he says, "*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*"

In other words, if He's given us His very own Son, the thing that He treasures above more than anything else...if He's given us Jesus, given us His blood, how will He not also give us the very things that we ask? Namely, seeking the Lord, desiring the Lord, gazing upon the beauty of the Lord, meditating upon the Lord, trusting in the sovereignty of God. These things are ours. Not by anything that we have done, but by everything that He has done.

So, read with me, if you would, Romans 8:35. "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*" Is there anything...anything going to prevent you, going to sever you, going to cut you off from Christ? He says,

*Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure... [the same confidence that David expresses, Paul expresses] I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

To God be the glory.

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