

**Sermon Series:** Storm Shelter: Psalms of God's Embrace  
**To be used with:** Session Two: The Shelter of God's Salvation  
**Sermon Title Possibilities:**  
 Making Fear Disappear

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:1-6

**Connection to Unit Theme:** *Storm Shelter: Psalms of God's Embrace* is a study of the comfort we find in the Old Testament book of Psalms. Session 2 is called "The Shelter of God's Salvation," and focuses on Psalm 27:1-6. The point of the study is "God Himself is my salvation."

These text based sermons draw from the same Scripture passages as the small group studies, but explore other themes from the passage. This way, you as the pastor can reinforce the passage without repeating the small group study.

**Introduction:** One summer day, a woman in Arkansas was sitting in her car in a parking lot when she heard a loud bang and then felt a sharp pain in the back of her head. She was holding her hands behind her head when someone walked by and asked, "Are you OK?" The woman answered, "I've been shot in the head, and I'm holding my brains in."

Well, it wasn't her brains. It was dough. A Pillsbury biscuit canister had exploded in the back seat, apparently from the heat, making a loud explosion and shooting the dough into the back of the woman's head.

Sometimes our fears are like that womans. They are unfounded and irrational. But other times, our fears are based on rational and well-founded reasons. Tonight we will look at Psalm 27 which deals with the subject of fear and how a focus on God can give as victory over all of our fears—whether rational or irrational.

*[Read Psalm 27]*

When I use the word fear tonight I mean all levels of fear from general apprehension and worry to dread and terror. Fear starts out when we are very young with fears of things like darkness, monsters, etc. and it continues into our teenage years with fears of things like rejection, humiliation and failure. Adulthood is also filled with possible fears such as fear of disease, death, financial problems, broken relationships, loved ones being hurt, storms, failure, aging, crime, etc.

Some people look for security in their bank account. Some seek that reassurance in a relationship. Others placed their trust in the government, the latest drug, etc. None of these are real solutions because none of them offer total security or absolute reassurance. No amount of money, success, or any position in life can truly give you peace in every situation. So the question becomes, "How can we have victory over fear?" That answer to this important question is given in Psalm 27 which says, in effect, "Focus on God and your fears will disappear!"

Certainly this is the main idea of Psalm 27. In verses 1-3 David expresses his confidence in God and an absence of fear in a very fearful situation because he is focused on God as his Light,

Salvation, and Stronghold. In verses 4-7 we see David focused on God. He is living in his presence, looking at his beauty, and listening to his voice. Because of this focus on God and dwelling in his presence David can lift his head with confidence and sing with joy as we see in verses 5,6. In vs. 7-14 he again is focused on God and prays to him in the midst of this trouble and is reminded that God will never forsake him (vs. 10) and will always guide him (vs. 11), therefore even though he does not receive an immediate answer or relief he can still say in verse 13, "I am still confident..."

## **I. Focus On God And Your Fears Will Disappear (v. 1)**

When we consider and think about who God is and what he will do in our lives there is no real reason to fear. This is why David asked the rhetorical question: "Whom should I fear?" or as we would put it, "Why should I be afraid?" He says this because his focus on God has reminded him of three things concerning God that are very reassuring.

- First he says, "the Lord is my light..." Very often troubling and fearful times are compared to darkness because we feel lost and in need of direction or light during those times. If you've ever walked into this sanctuary in total darkness there will be hesitation, caution, and apprehension because you are fearful about making a wrong turn or walking into something. The same would not be true when the lights are on. It is the same way in life, there are troubling, dark times in which fear is increased because we don't know which way to go or what to do, we are in the dark. David's fear disappears because he has recognized that the Lord is in his light in dark and fearful times. The Lord does not necessarily give David or us light but rather he personally becomes our light - our personal guide through the darkness safely.
- David also notes next that the Lord is his Salvation, which means that the Lord is his rescuer or deliverer. In other words David is not looking to weak people or his own self to rescue him or deliver him but rather he is looking at the Lord who is Jehovah.
- The Lord is also the "stronghold of my life..." A stronghold is a refuge, a place of safety from danger. This is a metaphor anyone who has lived through a hurricane or tornado season can relate to very well. All of us with common sense seek refuge-a stronghold during these storms. The greater the intensity of the storm the stronger the refuge we desire. The stronger the refuge the less fearful we will be! If you were to go through a hurricane in a mobile home you would be fearful because your refuge is weak and your stronghold is uncertain. But if you were to go through a hurricane in the concrete and steel reinforced Emergency Operations Center, you would be able to have confidence and peace.

David is saying that we should have confidence and peace not because there are no serious storms in our life but because we have a secure place, a sure stronghold, for the Lord is our refuge. As we look to the greatness of our God instead of looking at the greatness of our problems, our anxiety will fade. It is then that we will know that we have the Lord as a Light to guide us, as a Savior to rescue us, and as a Stronghold to protect us. We have the ultimate in security and therefore we can have peace and competence in our lives.

*Illustration:* One tribe of native Americans had a unique practice for training young braves. On the night of a boy's thirteenth birthday, he was placed in a dense forest to spend the entire night alone. Until then he had never been away from the security of his family and tribe. But on this night he was blindfolded and taken miles away. When he took off the blindfold, he was in the middle of thick woods. By himself. All night long.

Every time a twig snapped, he probably visualized a wild animal ready to pounce. Every time an animal howled, he imagined a wolf leaping out of the darkness. Every time the wind blew, he wondered what more sinister sound it masked. No doubt it was a terrifying night for many.

After what seemed like an eternity, the first rays of sunlight entered the interior of the forest. Looking around, the boy saw flowers, trees, and the outline of the path. Then, to his utter astonishment, he beheld the figure of a man standing just a few feet away, armed with a bow and arrow. It was the boy's father. He had been there all night long.

Citation: Leonard Sweet, SoulSalsa (Zondervan, 2000), pp. 23-24

*[Read vv. 2-3]*

David still expected to have trouble in his life - note that he says, "**when** evil men..." And "**when** my enemies..." David's use of the word "when" is indicative of the fact that he expects to have times of trouble in his life. God makes away for us to be free from troubled hearts but not from troubled times. David goes on to say that even if "and army beseech me my heart will not fear." David says "even then I will be confident." These verses remind us that we can have peaceful hearts in every kind of situation no matter how trying or troubling it may be. When we focus on God are fear will disappear even when "war breaks out against us."

I want my faith and confidence in God to be like David's so that we can say in every situation, "even then" we will be not fear. If the doctor tells you tomorrow, "you have terminal cancer" even then you can be without fear. If Social Security were to fail even then you can have peaceful hearts. If we were to go through an economic depression and you were to be laid off with no job opportunities in sight even then you could have absolute assurance and peace. How can we be free from fear and have total confidence and assurance in our lives? The answer is to focus on God and our fears will disappear.

*[Read vv. 4-6]*

These verses are often used to encourage us to make God as our highest priority and greatest desire. This is certainly needful, good and a main theme of the Bible but we don't want to miss the connection that these verses have to the subject of fear. It is David's actions in verse 4 that give him the victory over fear and confidence in God in verses 5,6. In fact the word "for" at the beginning of verse 5 makes a clear connection to the message of verse 4. God was David's all-in-all. The message is that David focused on God with every part of his life and it was this focus that enabled him to live with great faith and confidence.

David's focus on God is easy to see in verse 4. He had made God the very thing that he sought over all others. As he said "one thing that I ask - this is what I seek..." Now that it is single-minded focus on God. First David desired to "dwell in the house of the Lord" which is a metaphor for living in God's presence and staying close to God. Most people in David's day visited the temple but David wanted to live there as he said "all the days of his life." His life was continually focused on God and therefore he knew God intimately and that gave him confidence in every situation. He did not just want to think about our focus on God on Sundays, Wednesdays, holidays or when trouble came. No! He focused on God and drew close to Him continually.

Not only did he live in God's presence but he also looked at God's perfection. As he says in verse 4 his desire was to "gaze upon the beauty (perfect attributes) of the Lord." As a looked or better put focused on God's attributes his fears were relieved because he saw God faithfulness, power, love, etc.. He also focused on God by listening to his voice and his counsel rather than the voice of his fears or that of naysayers. He says that he would "seek Him in his temple." The word "seek" means to inquire or petition. In other words David is listening to God. He is taking his troubles to Him and seeking his counsel and therefore as he focuses on God his fears disappear.

When we, like David, live with God, look to God, and listen to God we will come to know Him intimately and during times of fear we will be able to express the same faith that David did in verses 5,6 where he says "... In the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord."

**Conclusion:** As David focused on God his fears disappeared so that his heart was confident that he would see "the goodness of the Lord" even though he had not yet received the answer he'd longed for. So he counsels himself and he counsels us verse 14 to "wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart..." David had many reasons to have anxiety and fear in his life but he had one greater reason to have peace. As we like David focused on the Lord and remember that he is our Light, our Salvation, and our Stronghold we can have victory over fear. As we make God our top priority and seek Him with all our hearts like David did in verse 4 we will be assured instead of anxious. We simply need to get our thoughts on God and turn to Him and prayer and remember that he will never turn away from us but has promised that as we wait for him we will see his goodness.

*Adapted from "Making Fear Disappear," Sermon by Larry Sarver. Sermoncentral.com*