

Your Light and Salvation

Psalm 27

[Another longer psalm today, so I invite you to read this psalm before moving on to the devotion.]

Our psalm today begins: ***The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?***

Well, you might answer that we have much to fear in our world today! You never know when the next maniacal gunman will shoot up a school, workplace, concert, theatre, or shopping mall where you may be at. If you are a furloughed government worker, you may be fearing the future, not knowing how long it will be until your next paycheck. A dreaded disease may find you fearing for yourself or a loved one - what treatments and side effects you will have to endure, and what will be the outcome. Or maybe your fears are much smaller than that and more personal. I think it would be hard to find anyone who has no fears.

The psalmist mentions many problems and troubles that he is facing, including evildoers, armies, enemies, adversaries, false witnesses, violence - even his own father and mother have forsaken him, he says! Yet throughout this psalm there is a note of confidence in the midst of all this. The confidence of faith. That yes, there is a lot of sin and evil in this world, and things will undoubtedly not always be easy. And if we focus on the problems and troubles rising up and threatening us, we can find ourselves filled with fear. They are so big, strong, and powerful, and I am so small and weak. What can I do against such foes?

So this psalm starts out by focusing our attention somewhere else - not on the problems and troubles that menace, but on the one who is greater than them and who can defeat them! The LORD is my light and my salvation! He is able to provide what I need, defeat any enemy, and grant me escape. The LORD doesn't promise us a trouble-free life, but does promise to be with us. And He

showed that He is good to that promise on Christmas, when He came to be with us - God with us, as His name, Immanuel, means. He lived with us, grew with us, and then died for us on the cross. And He did so to conquer our biggest and most fearsome enemy of all: death. He paid the price for our sins with His death, so now our sins cannot condemn us but are forgiven. And then He broke the power of death with His resurrection, and so death cannot threaten us or hold us who are in Jesus. And if He did that for us, St. Paul says, won't He also graciously give us everything else we need (Romans 8:32)? For isn't everything else small potatoes compared to that?

That's the secret to the psalmist's confidence! Even though he lived a long time before the Son of God was born and named Jesus, God had promised such a Saviour, and the psalmist trusted that promise. And it gave him such freedom! Freedom from worry and fear, knowing that the enemies and troubles of this life are puny and weak next to our Saviour. The darkness of sin and evil give way in the light of His love. Yes, ***the LORD is my light and my salvation!*** There is no reason to fear. We may still, but we don't need to.

That's hard to learn. It's hard to live by such faith. And satan is constantly trying to get us to forget that reality! That's why it's so important to stay in God's Word and hear His promises and all that He has done for you. That's why it's so important to be in church and hear that Word preached and receive the forgiveness we need. That's why we should never cut ourselves off from our fellow believers (even if they drive us crazy!), but see them as gifts from God, to encourage us and help us through the tough times. And we can do the same for them.

For tough times will come - you can be sure of that. But anchored in the LORD and in His promises, His goodness, His grace, His forgiveness, and His victory, we can be confident like the psalmist and not panic or be overcome with fear, but say in the end, ***"Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!"*** That's not always easy. Waiting can be really tough, especially if things drag on. But the LORD will not let you down. He is with you and will deliver you. Maybe in this life, or maybe when

you wake up with Him in the next! But that too is victory! The ultimate victory, actually. When there will be no more troubles, fears, or enemies.

So until He does, we will wait. Pray. Stay in His Word. Receive His gifts of Word and Sacrament. And focusing on Him, the one who is your light and your Saviour, will make a big difference in your life.

Lord Jesus, thank You for coming to us in this world of sin and trouble, to be with us and to rescue us from evil through Your death and resurrection. When I fear the things of this world and life, help me to look at You and all that You have done for me! Strengthen me in faith to know that You are bigger than any problem, stronger than any foe, and that Your goodness and mercy never end. Help me to wait for You and how You will work in my life, and help me be always confident in Your working, even when it seems slow to me. Be my light and my salvation, my Saviour, now and always! Amen.