

One Thing is Necessary

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, brothers and sisters and friends as well. Great to be here with you. Do keep that psalm open in front of you. A couple of weeks ago, Catherine and I took some time away and I spent much of our holiday in a rainy tent reading about George Whitefield.

One of my children started asking the question, keeps asking the question, Daddy, why are you talking about George Whitefield again? Well, if you don't know who George Whitefield was, he was born in 1714 and died in 1770.

I don't know if I've got a photo of him, do I? He was arguably the greatest evangelist who has ever lived since the Apostle Paul. And he was a leader in something called the Evangelical Awakening, which was a movement in the 18th century that saw many thousands of people converted.

And he had a huge impact on British and American society. Now, the Evangelical Awakening was marked by a slogan, You Must Be Born Again.

It's sort of almost in every one of their sermons. They keep banging on about this thing. And it got me thinking, what is the slogan that our generation needs to hear?

[1 : 19] If you could get one message to ring out across our nation, what would it be? Again, in the 16th century, the Reformers had a slogan, didn't they?

People like Luther and Calvin and Zwingli and Cranmer and Tyndale and so on. The slogan was, Justification by Faith Alone. But what is the slogan that our generation needs to hear?

What is one succinct message that you think, if we could get it out there, would revive our churches, would capture public attention, would show people the way back to God, what they were really missing about God?

Well, I wonder if you could take 30 seconds just to turn to the person next to you and have a chat about that. Talk to the two or three people before I tell you some of my thoughts.

I'd love to hear what you actually think. You know, what's the slogan you just, you wish was ringing out across our nation and everyone was hearing? All right. If I can cut in. Are there any brave souls who would share their answers with us?

[2 : 27] Just stick your hand up and tell me. What do you reckon? Yeah, Daryl? It's not about me. It's not about me. Yeah, right. Yeah. I mean, I'd love to hear maybe a little bit more, but anyway, we'll have to discuss these after, over morning tea or something.

It's not about me. That's a good one. Yeah. What else? God is the one source of truth. God is the one source of truth. Yeah, that is great.

I think, what was Rosanna Rice's one? The truth will set you free. The truth will set you free. And of course, that's on the lips of Jesus. He's saying, I have the words of truth and the truth will set you free.

That would be a good one to get out there. Yeah, God is the one source of truth in a postmodern relativistic world. What else? Yeah.

The creator of the universe loves you deeply. Yeah. The creator of the universe loves you deeply. Wouldn't that be wonderful if all Australians were hearing that? Yeah, that would be great.

[3 : 28] Yeah. Practice being godly. Practice being godly. And we've already got a jingle. Okay. Fantastic. Now look, we'll stop there. It should be, it definitely should be a Colin song.

I'll tell you what I've been thinking about. I've got a few of them. This is one of them. Okay. I sort of feel like I've been circling around something I can't quite put my finger on. But this one is from Luke chapter 10 verse 42.

It's where Jesus says, one thing is necessary. One thing is necessary. Do you remember the scene where Jesus is, he's with Mary and Martha teaching.

Mary is busy, busy, busy, anxiously serving. She is like a picture of religious duty and works righteousness and the burden that that is.

And Mary is just sitting there listening to Jesus. She is a picture of faith. And when Martha complains about her sister's inaction, Jesus says, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.

[4 : 39] Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her. I love that passage, and I wonder if perhaps it gives us the slogan our generation needs to hear.

One thing is necessary. What is it? Listening to Jesus. Active listening, of course, and listening with faith that will drive us out to action afterwards as well.

Faith without works is dead. But when you boil it all down, Jesus says one thing is necessary. In a world where everyone, it seems, is so busy and distracted all the time because we want to have it all, even in our churches, I think, sometimes Christians are the busiest people of all because we want to exercise and study and be entertained and have a glorious career and get married and raise kids just like everybody else.

And then on top of that, we add our religious duty and our churchgoing and our evangelistic guilt. Likewise, I think sometimes we are a culture obsessed with balance, obsessed with living kind of balanced lives.

You've got to have a little bit of this and a little bit of that. Anything too single-minded, anything too devout is seen as fanatical and unhinged and immature.

[5 : 57] Perhaps religion especially is seen that way, isn't it, after September 11th? But Jesus is fanatical, sounds unbalanced, unhinged, doesn't he?

One thing is necessary, listening to him. I mean, I immediately want to caveat that. But Jesus doesn't. Mary has chosen the better portion, the best portion, the only portion one needs.

Now, as I've been pondering all of this, just as it happens in God's providence, it's time to turn our attention to Psalm 27 this week. And did you notice in verse 4 that David also makes a rather unhinged, fanatical, one-eyed statement?

He tells us he wants one thing. One thing that you might say David thought was necessary. He says, One thing have I asked of the Lord, that I will seek after.

So what is the one thing David has asked of the Lord? What is the one thing he is going to seek after? And of course, David doesn't quite say listening to Jesus.

[7 : 09] But I think in his own words, he basically says the same thing. Verse 4, 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, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

In other words, if I can try and sum it up, I think this captures what both Jesus is saying in Luke chapter 10 and what David is saying here. The one thing David wants from the Lord is the Lord himself.

Isn't that it, right? The one thing David wants from the Lord is the Lord himself. Of course, that was exactly what Mary wanted in Luke chapter 10, just to sit at the feet of Jesus, to gaze upon his beauty, as it were.

Not his beautiful physical form, but by listening to his words, she wants to know him, to have communion with him. This is the one thing that all genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus want from him.

We just want more of him. So my aim this morning is to encourage you and even implore you and beg you perhaps to have a single-minded, one-eyed focus on the Lord.

[8 : 32] Be unbalanced. In that way that people are unbalanced when they fall in love. Be besotted. Give your heart completely to the Lord because you will find him all satisfying.

You will find joy and life in his beauty when you gaze upon him that you won't find anywhere else. So there are two sections to the psalm, basically.

In verses 1 to 6, David talks about God. And then in verses 7 to 14, David talks to God. It's not an exact description, but it's a close enough summary, I think. And there's lots of repetition between the two halves of the psalm.

The same kind of vocabulary keeps cropping up in both. And likewise, I think that tells you how the psalm works. And in verses 1 to 6, David lays out his doctrine, what he believes about God.

And then in verses 7 to 13, he sort of puts that doctrine into practice as he prays to God. So let's dive in.

[9 : 35] In verse 1, David begins with a couple of rhetorical questions. 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? It's a bit like Romans 8, isn't it? When Paul says, if God is for us, who should be against us? Who can be against us? Notice how in verse 1, David uses three metaphors to describe the Lord.

The first one is light. The Lord is my light, he says. In other words, light is pure and good and true. Light is dazzling and beautiful.

Light is incompatible with darkness. And light conquers darkness, drives darkness away. Darkness is frightening. Darkness is evil. But when the Lord is my light, I have no need to be afraid.

And David says, the Lord is my salvation, my help, my deliverance. Notice how the language here is so strong. David doesn't just say that Yahweh is his savior. He says that Yahweh is his salvation.

[10 : 42] Again, just sort of by comparison, it's a bit like when Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Isn't it? Jesus doesn't just show us the way, and he doesn't just tell us the truth, and he doesn't just give us life.

There's something more than that. And it's not even that he has, it's not even just saying that he has a monopoly on the way and the truth and the life. Right? That he's not just saying that I'm the only one who can show you the way.

I'm the only one who can tell you the truth. I'm the only one who can give you life. I mean, that's true. But no, he's saying something more than that. He's not just the only source of truth in life.

He is the way, the truth, and the life. If we want to get to the Father, we must walk along Him, as it were. He is our path. If we want to know the truth, we must know Him.

He is the truth. If we want to have life, we must have Him within us, as it were, animating and sustaining our souls and bodies. Well, here, in the same way, David says, the Lord is my salvation.

[11 : 56] He doesn't just bring my salvation. He is my salvation. In Him, I am safe. Apart from Him, I am lost. And then thirdly, kind of fleshing this out, I think, David says, the Lord is the stronghold of my life.

The image is one of a mighty fortress. David is hiding inside the Lord, isn't he? He's not hiding behind walls of iron or stone.

He's not behind wooden spikes and ditches or behind guns and tanks and pillboxes. These things are all weak and vulnerable. So easily overcome.

But David is hiding in the Lord. Yahweh, he says, is the impenetrable stronghold of my life. The mighty walls surrounding me.

Of whom shall I be afraid? Now, of course, we know the answers to these rhetorical questions already, don't we? The answer is no one. But David fleshes out his answers for us in verses 2 and 3.

[13 : 03] Having described God as a stronghold, the implication is that David's under threat and that's what we discover in verses 2 and 3. He talks about evildoers, adversaries, and foes. In verse 3, he talks about an army encamped against him.

Of course, David did have armies encamped against him and war rising against him. David lived in frightening times. He was plagued by enemies for most of his life.

Vicious, bloodthirsty men like Goliath, like Saul. We don't know exactly when this psalm was written and partly that's because it could be describing any number of occasions when David's life was in jeopardy.

And very often, the odds were stacked against him, horizontally speaking. But look at what David says in verses 2 and 3. 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 arise against me, yet I will be confident. And the last word confidence there, it's about faith, it's about trust.

[14 : 12] When you confide in someone, you are trusting them, aren't you? And David is so confident because the Lord is my light, the Lord is my salvation, the Lord is my stronghold. Why on earth should I be afraid?

It just wouldn't make any sense. And brothers and sisters, don't we have even more reason to put our trust in God and to enjoy confidence in Him? 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? See what Paul is saying. Do we need more proof, more evidence of

God's love for us and His care and His power to save us?

He who did not spare His own Son. Are you going to hold back other things from us? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?

Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God. Who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

[15 : 23] As it is written, for your sake we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. Now in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For 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 creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So brothers and sisters, there is no need to live in fear. In chaotic times, live in God. Live in Christ. Surround yourself with Him. Let Him take you under His wing.

And then you will be able to live confidently in His protection. Which brings us again to verse 4. And in the context now, hopefully you can see why David brings this up. He is surrounded by enemies. Where does he want to take shelter? In the house of the Lord. In the Lord's temple. That is where he will be safe and happy. We have seen this theme tracked through a number of previous Psalms now.

In Psalm 25 for instance, verse 19, Consider how many are my foes and with what violent hatred they hate me. O God my soul and deliver me. Let me not be put to shame for I take refuge in you.

[16 : 38] Or again in Psalm 26, O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells. So now we are picking up that theme again in Psalm 27.

David wants one thing. He prays for it and he seeks it. That is, he is straining for it and striving for it in his daily life. He wants it every day, every day, every day.

All the days of his life he is not interested in other tourism opportunities. Like going and seeing the pyramids or the Grand Canyon. He is not interested in art galleries or going to the movies.

He does not have these other visions in mind that he has to knock off his bucket list. He is hooked on one thing. He just wants to sit in one place in the house of the Lord to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

I wonder if that sounds rather boring to you or to religious. Perhaps too ascetic. Isn't the world supposed to be enjoyed?

[17 : 42] Well, to me, it's a bit like going on a picnic with your beloved. I wonder if this image will be helpful for you. I just think it helps me. Because the world is supposed to be enjoyed.

God's world. But I think the world is supposed to be enjoyed like raspberries or strawberries at the picnic. You know, your beloved has provided them for you. They're delicious.

You can appreciate them with thankfulness in your heart. But when people spend their lives traveling the world to see the sights or obsessed with the latest gadgets and gizmos or intoxicated with cultural events or comfortable real estate, it's like they've taken their eyes off their beloved and become transfixed on the fruit.

And they're guzzling down the fruit. increasingly finding it dissatisfying. But the fruit is there on the side. It's meant to enhance your enjoyment of your beloved, isn't it?

So long as you keep your eyes fixed on him. And the things of this world will simultaneously, I think, grow strangely dim and more delightful. You'll start to realize on the one hand that nothing compares to him.

[19 : 00] It's him who's satisfying, all satisfying and enjoyable. And on the other hand, it's him who's given us every good thing to enjoy, every good and perfect gift.

Now this word inquire in verse 4 is really interesting. Because within the temple system, it's really a technical term for examining an offering.

So when the Israelites would bring a lamb or a bull to be sacrificed, it had to be examined, scrutinized by the priests so they could make sure that it was absolutely perfect, it was blameless, it didn't have a gammy leg or a pussy nostril or even a scratch on it.

You see, what David is saying here is that he wants to examine the Lord himself. Not the offering. He wants to lift his eyes up and gaze on the beauty of the Lord.

He wants to scrutinize his perfections. Check him out from every angle. Take a look at his glorious love, his majestic power over here, his fearsome wrath over there, his spectacular mercy.

[20 : 03] Do you see? Holy, holy, holy, this way and that way. From this aspect and from that aspect, like a diamond that glistens from every viewpoint. No matter which way you look at it, it's always amazing.

That's what God is like. No matter which way you look at him, no matter which passage you read, it's always amazing. In fact, you don't mind me bringing this up, I think Keith mentioned to me that Psalm 27 is the best psalm in the Psalter, or one of the most glorious psalms in the Psalter. I think every preacher feels like that about every single passage every time. Every time they look at it. Psalm 28, that's one of the best ones. Psalm 29. You've just found another angle, another angle on the glorious diamond that is our God.

Or perhaps better still, it's like a pearl of great price. Remember that parable Jesus tells in Matthew chapter 13. Actually, he tells us a couple of parables in quick succession.

He says, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field.

[21 : 15] Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Sounds fanatical, doesn't it? Unhinged. One thing, you see, is necessary. One thing. The scripture keeps hammering this home. Call it what you will, listening to Jesus, dwelling in the Lord's temple, the kingdom of heaven.

It's all really the same thing. It's God himself. The one thing David wants from the Lord is the Lord himself. The one thing that will satisfy you and me is the Lord himself.

Listening to him, gazing on his beauty, living in his kingdom, under his rule. And then in verses 5 and 6, notice the 4. 4, he will hide me in his shelter.

In the day of trouble, he will conceal me under the cover of his tent. He will lift me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy.

[22 : 26] I will sing and make melody to the Lord. So as David brings the first half of this psalm to a close, he paints a picture for us of life in the temple. It's a picture of safety and joy, surrounded by trouble and evil on every side.

David is not afraid because he has found a safe haven. And you know, just like David, we live in days of trouble, days of evil, days of wickedness, days when we are surrounded by enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

I think of that vivid picture at the end of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We need God's armor, don't we? To stand in the evil day. In the midst of such evil, when we might easily be tempted to give in to terror and despair, we don't need to be afraid.

Why? Because the Lord is my hiding place. He will shelter me. Today and forever. He will conceal you if you'll come to him under the cover of his tent and his house.

He will lift you high upon a rock. The Lord Jesus Christ himself is our rock. And notice how the lifting in verse 5 is paralleled by the lifting in verse 6. David says, and now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me.

[23 : 48] You know, when your head is down, it's a mark of despondency, hopelessness. Why do we drop our heads? It's because we can't cope. It's all too much.

But David says, look now, lift up your heads. There's nothing to fear. There's no need to hide. Our enemies will not get the better of us. The darkness will not overcome us.

You don't need to hunker down beneath the parapet. He who is in us and around us and whose everlasting arms are underneath us is greater than he who is in the world.

And so David responds to God's salvation by offering sacrifices with shouts of joy, thanksgiving offerings. The right response to the love of God is to love him in return.

This is all our beloved asks of us. that we would love him in return, that we would appreciate him. Love must be requited. It must be reciprocated.

[24 : 54] That's part of what loving someone is, to long for their love in return. In his grace and kindness, God has drawn us into his temple and granted us safety in there.

He calls us to himself because he wants to know us. He wants to be with us. And our response to him is to come, wide eyes, come with big hearts, come with smiling faces, ready to gaze on his beauty.

Ready to enjoy him. Now at this point we're going to do something a little bit unusual. We're going to take a break from the sermon for a moment and we're going to sing. Why not?

David wants us to sing and make melody to the Lord and we have lots of wonderful things to sing about. I've mentioned a couple of times Romans chapter 8 already. So I thought it might be good for us to sing a song together which is based on that chapter.

We're going to sing God is for us to remind each other of the wonderful truths about our God. So I'll hand over to the musicians. Well good morning everyone.

[26 : 05] Morning brothers and sisters. I'm just kidding. We'll get on with the second half of the psalm then. Now as we move into the second half of this psalm remember David shifts from talking about God as we've been singing about him to talking to him.

Notice in verse 7 David begins with an imperative. Hear. This is his first request. Hear, O Lord. There are no imperatives in the first half of the psalm and then in verses 7 to 13 there are about 13. Be gracious to me. Answer me. Et cetera, et cetera. So right off the bat I think this tells you something helpful about the essence of prayer which is that prayer is about knowing what you want from God and asking God for it.

Of course humbly. Of course reverently. And of course with thanks. You know just swagger up to God. Talk to him as if he's your mate or a genie in a bottle or a vending machine.

There is more of course than just prayer in our relationship to God. It needs to be more than just asking. But prayer is an important part of our relationship to God. And David shows us I think that we don't need to approach God timidly as if he doesn't want to hear from us.

[27 : 24] As if he's not our loving father eager to hear from us. We don't need to kind of constantly caveat or pussyfoot around or I don't know worry about our theological accuracy or talk as if it's more godly not to know what you want.

You know Lord I pray for Jim to be healed but if that's not your will then your will I don't I'm not really I don't really mind if Jim's healed or not.

I don't really know I just want you to do just whatever you were going to do anyway. Just do whatever you want. You know whatever you think is best. I'm sorry I even asked. There is a sort of strange piety I think that kind of leads in that direction sometimes.

And it starts to sound like we don't know what the good is. We don't know that life and health is good. And that's the thing to ask for. And or we're not sure if God is good or powerful or if prayer is going to do anything.

You know we don't want to sound silly asking for things that are just too grand or just too small. But when my children come up to me and Jesus tells us to pray like children I think children are a helpful model in this regard.

[28 : 40] They make their requests. I often say no because I'm wiser than they are. But that doesn't perturb them. They just keep on asking. Usually for lollies and chocolate and dessert they keep on asking because they know daddy is generous.

And he always has delicious things for them. And they know daddy is weak in a pushover. And that of course is in contrast to God our father. But friends we are to approach God like little children.

We don't know what's best for us really. We can't see the big picture all the time. But we can still go and ask God for good gifts. And when they will be good for us.

Our God is a generous God. And he will lavish them upon us in response to our prayers. God loves to hear our prayers. He loves that we depend on him. That we know that he is the strongest, the smartest, and the best father we could ever possibly imagine.

And we always want to come to ask him for help. So, David asks a lot in the second half of this passage. It's very punchy.

[29 : 52] He keeps getting straight to the point, this is what I want. And of course, because as we've already seen, David knows what he wants. The one thing he wants is the Lord himself. All of David's requests ultimately revolve around this one thing.

It's probably most obvious, I think, in verses 8 to 10. David says, So you see what David's request is all about at the beginning there?

It's all about God's face, isn't it? He wants to see God's face. He is seeking God's face. The face is really the window into the heart of a person. If you want to have a heart-to-heart, you need to have a face-to-face.

And if you want to have a heart-to-heart, you need to have a face-to-face. I love how the Bible is so concrete, actually. I would probably talk about God's presence or something like that. But the Bible talks about God's face.

God doesn't literally have a face, of course. He doesn't have eyes and ears and a nose and a mouth until he assumed humanity in the person of the Lord Jesus. But still, with this kind of easy-to-understand language, the Bible talks about God's face.

[31 : 18] David wants to know God, so he wants to be able to see his expression. He wants to see him smile, see the love in his eyes.

In verse 9, if God were to hide his face from David, it would be devastating. It would be a sign of God's anger, a sign of rejection, how great the pain of searing loss.

The father turns his face away. David begs God not to abandon him. Cast me not off, forsake me not. It's the same word we saw back in Psalm 22, in verse 2.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This is the worst fate David can imagine, to be abandoned by God. In verse 10, he says, well, I'm not sure if verse 10 is the best translation of this verse in the ESV.

I think it sort of suggests too much about David's family life or what his parents did to him. But the CSB and the NIV do a better job, I think. David is saying something like, even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord cares for me.

[32 : 29] Even if. I'd say it may not have necessarily happened. I doubt that it did. But even if David were disowned by his own parents, even if he were orphaned, that would not be unbearable so long as David could take shelter in the house of the Lord.

The Lord is the father of the fatherless. I don't know what Jesse's house was like. You know, were they a happy family? Maybe. Perhaps you come from a happy family.

Perhaps you don't. But brothers and sisters in Christ, we are all in a new family. We all have a good father. Whatever background you've come from, if you feel lost, like an orphan, forsaken, cold, vulnerable, exposed.

On the outside, remember the Lord will take you in. Come to him. He will adopt you to be his own son.

If you're looking for a new home, come into his tent. Let him give you the shelter, the safety, and the joy that you long for. In verses 11 and 12, David returns to the theme of his enemies.

[33 : 45] First, he wants instruction from God about how to live God's way. Lead me on a level path, he says that is a path of justice, of uprightness, of fairness.

We use the same kinds of metaphors in English, don't we? David wants to walk the straight and narrow. He wants to walk the line. He wants to take the high road. He doesn't want to succumb to the dirty tactics of his enemies.

And so become God's enemy. But on the other hand, of course, he wants vindication as well, desperately. He doesn't want these false witnesses to win the day. So often in the scriptures, and of course most horrendously in the case of our Lord Jesus, godly people are slandered and lied about. And this is one of the things that hurts the most. Speculation and spin are taken as fact. Rumors and gossip spread like poison. And I think in Australia, in our day, I think we need to be particularly aware of this kind of persecution and read our Bibles carefully to see when the Bible talks about this kind of thing.

Because we don't want to be alarmist or exaggerate things. I'm glad that we don't live in a country where we get burned at the stake. And yet the scriptures talk a lot about slander and ridicule as persecution.

[35 : 07] What worldly people will say about us. How they will look down on us and ostracize us and relentlessly malign us. And certainly we do experience that in Australia, don't we?

And it's exhausting. You turn on the TV, I turn on the TV to watch my favorite show. And every now and again, they just take a swipe at the God of the Bible and the silly fools who believe in him.

And, you know, that's my favorite show. Every day. I won't tell you what it is. You'll judge me for it. All right. It's Seinfeld. But anyway, so I'm watching Seinfeld.

I love this. I love this show. I love this guy. I love all the... It's hilarious. So much immorality though. And all the time just attacking Christian things, making us look stupid.

Or perhaps at work, you just can't click with your colleagues. And, you know, your boss really doesn't like you because you just won't join in with the kind of bawdy talk or the drinking or the

obsession with consumerism and real estate and climbing the career ladder or whatever it might be. [36 : 24] Brothers and sisters, hang in there. If you're going through anything like that at the moment, I don't know, but press on. And hold on to hope. And listen to David's last words in Psalm 27 because they are words of hope and courage.

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. It's a rousing conclusion, isn't it? You'll notice again there's a shift in person. He's not speaking to the Lord anymore, but about the Lord. I'm not sure who he's speaking to. Is he speaking to himself, maybe? Is he speaking to all of us?

You can say these words to yourself. Make sure you encourage your neighbor with them over morning tea. I believe. Wait for the Lord. Be strong.

Take courage. David is confident that one day prayer to the invisible God will turn to praise. Of the God whose face we are beholding.

[37 : 27] Faith will turn to sight. All his desires to see the Lord. All his seeking after that. All his hunger and thirst for righteousness. All his prayers will not be disappointed.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Notice in verse 13 how David talks about the land of the living. Some scholars are sort of reluctant to read too much into this.

They don't want us to talk about the resurrection. As if, you know, because David didn't understand all that we understand. I think that's tragic and kind of misses the great climax of this psalm.

David was a prophet and he believed in the resurrection. He knew that one day one of his descendants would sit on God's throne and reign over God's people forever. And actually Peter quotes David from Psalm 16 to prove the resurrection of the Messiah in Acts chapter 2 if you remember.

What the Bible is always talking about is the land of the living. It's the land of resurrection. It's another way of talking about the kingdom of God. What Abel was putting his hope in.

[38 : 41] What Abraham put his hope in. And Isaac and Jacob which Esau despised. Joseph and Moses and Joshua and David all facing death. Always looking forward to the resurrection into the land of the living.

Verse 14 is actually very reminiscent of Joshua, isn't it? As he's about to enter the promised land. Be strong and let your heart take courage. And you hear the echoes of Joshua 1.

Well I take it that's what David is looking forward to. Not the promised land of Canaan which he's already in. David's looking forward to the new promised land. The home of righteousness.

The new heavens and earth. The land of the living. Where he could live with God and all his people and look upon the goodness of the Lord forever and ever.

So. Time for me to wrap up. This second sermon already. What do you want from the Lord?

[39 : 43] And do you want lots of things really? Or do you only want one thing? Like David does. This passage is a radical call to prioritize.

To focus. Don't try and have it all. Do not set your heart on pathetic little lamps.

You know like marriage. Career. Popularity. Physical beauty. Do not set your heart on pathetic little lamps when you can have the light of the world.

Do not look to anything else for salvation. Perhaps you've heard theologians talk about functional saviors. Functional saviors. People look to marriage for salvation.

Career. Popularity. They think that these things will save them from their lonely miserable lives. But they won't. Say to God. You are my salvation.

[40 : 50] And say to God. You are my stronghold. If you're afraid. Whatever it might be that you're afraid of. If you're afraid of other people. And what they think of you. Or what they might do to you.

If you're afraid of poverty. If you're afraid of principalities and powers. The world. The flesh. And the devil. And turn to God.

Hide in Him. Shelter in Him for refuge. If you're afraid of illness. If you're afraid of cancer. If you're afraid of death. Don't let your eyes get fixated on your enemies day after day.

Or they will seem larger and larger. And scarier and scarier by the day. But come to the Lord and gaze on the beauty of the Lord and on His goodness.

And your enemies will just fade into the background. I want to finish with a quote from Henry Scougall. Because he had a big impact on George Whitefield.

[41 : 55] Henry Scougall wrote many years ago. The love of God is a delightful and affectionate sense of the divine perfections. Which makes the soul resign and sacrifice itself wholly unto Him.

Desiring above all things to please Him. And delighting in nothing so much as in fellowship and communion with Him. And being ready to do or suffer anything for His sake.

Or at His pleasure. May it be that we love the Lord God like that. This year and forever. Let's pray. Amen. Glorious Father, thank you for these precious words from Psalm 27. Write these words upon our hearts.

Give us a true sense of your perfections. We want taste buds that are not dull and eyes that are not dim. That we may taste and see that you are good.

[42 : 57] Give us single-minded devotion like David. That we might long for one thing. To gaze upon you in the land of the living. For we know that then and only then will we find true satisfaction and pleasure.

And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.