Whom Shall I Fear?

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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? 2 When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh-my adversaries and foes-they shall stumble and fall. 3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident. 4 One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple. 5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock. 6 Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD. 7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! 8 'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!' Your face, LORD, do I seek. 9 Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation! 10 If my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up. (Psalm 27:1-10)

1. My Experience in England

One afternoon during our trip to England, I got the opportunity to join a tour of a tower at Salisbury Cathedral. There were 332 steps put in stages and roughly 220 feet from the ground to the top. Since I liked mountain climbing when I was in Korea, I thought the tower tour would be fun. But I was surprised when I got to the top and had a moment of a fear of heights.

I also found myself in a fearful situation on the way home. The place where we stayed was roughly one and a half hours from the airport. I made sure to get up 6 hours before the flight to take the subway to the airport. I was worried I might miss my flight. When I got back from the trip, I asked myself. Did I really trust the Lord to walk with me through my trip?

2. There is Nothing to be Afraid of

We know there are many things that can be dangerous in life and often situations where we might feel fear. Yet sometimes we encounter someone who is not afraid of at all. The author of Psalm 27 is one of them. Psalm 27:1 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?***" Who is the writer? We attribute Psalm 27 to King David. When David reflected on his life, most of his time he was in danger. He was chased by king Saul. His son Absalom tried to kill him. Although we don't know the exact time, there was

likely at least one major event going on in David's life where he might have every reason to be filled with fear.

Even in these situations, David expresses his confidence in the Lord. David says that the Lord is his light, salvation, and stronghold. Light implies a force that dispels darkness. David affirms that even in the darkness, he has no fear, because God is the light that dispels this darkness. God is also salvation, which means God will deliver David when he is in trouble. "Stronghold" means "a place of safety." If the Lord is his light, salvation, and stronghold, David asks, "of whom shall I be afraid?"

In response to the question at the end of verse 1, David speaks of the enemies who comes against him. David's enemies tried to break him, but David would remain confident in the Lord without fear. In verse 4, David expresses his longing to dwell in the house of the Lord. He does not refer here to Solomon's temple because the temple was not yet built. Rather, David refers to living permanently in God's presence. In verse 6, David elaborates his desire to dwell in the Lord's house. The reason David wants this is to remain in the protective presence of the Lord. As a result, David would triumph over his enemies and sing praises to the Lord.

In verse 7 through 10, David prays earnestly and asks the Lord not to forsake him since he is in great need. David begs the Lord not to reject him. He affirms that the Lord would not forsake him, even if his parents did. This should not be interpreted literally, but should be understood in terms of the intimate relationship between God and David. The Lord functions as a parent to King David. In verses 13 & 14, David expresses his confidence that he would survive and remain alive. David encourages himself and others to wait for the Lord's deliverance if he or others are in need of help.

Where does David's confidence come from? What makes him so sure about God's presence in his life? This confidence comes from his experience. David knew how he was chosen as the second king of the Israelites. Samuel thought God would choose one of David's older brothers as the second king of Israel. But God says none of them would be king of Israel. In 1 Samuel 16:11, Samuel says to David's father Jesse, "***Are these all the sons you have?***" Jesse says, "***There is still the youngest, but he is tending the sheep***." The youngest boy is David. Samuel says, "***Send for him***." When David arrives, the Lord says, "***Rise and anoint him: he is the one***." A lowly shepherd boy David was chosen as the second king of the Israelites. I am sure David was regularly reminded of how he became king and was grateful for God for choosing him.

3. John Wesley Was in Fire

One of the most dramatic events in John Wesley's life was the time when he was rescued from a fire. On February 9, 1709, the Wesley family was awoken to a fire on the roof of the Epworth rectory where the family lived. The

house filled with smoke and John Wesley's father, his mother, and his servants hurried to get the children out of the house. Young John was still missing.

A five-year old John Wesley found himself alone in the house. He dragged a chest to the bedroom window and climbed on top of it. Someone in the yard saw John and two people worked together to save John Wesley. One of them climbed on the shoulders of the other. Although they barely reached the windowsill, the two saved John. A moment later, the roof of the rectory came crashing down.

John Wesley would always remember this event. In November 1753, Wesley fell ill and thought he might die. He wrote down the inscription for his tombstone: "Here lieth the Body of John Wesley, a brand plucked out of burning: who died of a consumption in the fifty-first year of his age, not leaving, after his debts are paid, ten pounds behind him: praying, God be merciful to me, an unprofitable servant!" Fortunately, John Wesley recovered and would live another 37 years. He did not forget that he was saved by God through his neighbors even decades after he was pulled from the fire.

In our lives, there are many times where we experience God's intervention through others. When I was five years old, a friend of mine invited me to Vacation Bible School where I was first exposed to the Gospel. My older brother would protect me from elementary to high school to make sure the other kids wouldn't bother me. In these ways, God intervened in my life.

4. 2018 VBS

From tomorrow until we are going to have VBS. The theme of this year is "Shipwrecked: Rescued by Jesus." Our VBS children will learn that Jesus rescues them when they are in trouble. When they are lonely, the Lord will hold them close. When they worry, the Lord comes to rescue each time. When they struggle, they need to be still, and know that the Lord is God. Jesus forgives them and is their power when they feel weak.

Psalm 27:10 is the key Bible verse for the first day of VBS. Psalm 27:10 of New Living Translation says, "***Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close***." As children grow they have different worries and fears. One of common childhood fears is fear of being separated from a parent. King David says that God would never forsake him and would be close to him always. If God is always with us, there is nothing to fear. How can the children learn they don't have anything to fear? Someone has to teach them and share their personal stories so the children don't need to live in worry or fear. VBS is one of the best opportunities for us to serve our children in that way, teaching them about what God is doing in our lives and reflecting God's character and love to our children.

5. Jesus Calms the Storm

When I meditated on the theme of VBS, the story of a boat came to my mind. Mark 4:35 and the following tell us what happened when Jesus and his disciples got into a boat to go to the other side of the sea of Galilee. While they were sailing across, Jesus fell asleep. Suddenly a windstorm struck the lake, and the boat started sinking. They were in danger. They went to Jesus and woke him up, “Master, Master! We are about to drown!” Jesus got up and ordered the wind and waves to stop. They obeyed, and everything was calm. The disciples were amazed. They said to each other, “Who is this? He can give orders to the wind and the waves, and they obey him!”

This story tells us that problems occur in every area of life. Jesus’ disciples encounter a terrible storm. Our life is like a sea voyage. Sometimes we have stormy weather than calm seas. We need to prepare for the storms. What is the best way for our preparation? Instead of being afraid of or panicked, we need to trust and move ahead remembering that Jesus is with us in our journey. I am sure you have seen this image. If we are in stormy days, we need to let Jesus be the captain. I hope our VBS children can keep this in mind throughout their life journey. Then they will be grateful to our church and our Lord.

6. Conclusion

The world will never be free of problems and dangers. And people quite often feel fear or worry. We observe our modern-day problems every day. There are storms, troubles, hardships, dangers, and sicknes that face each of us. In this situation, how can we live without constant fear and worry? The answer would be that we trust the author and protector of our lives. Our God is the one that stands with us and gives us the direction and help that we need in any situation that may come up in life.

7. Application

King David asks “whom shall I fear?” and “of whom shall I be afraid?” David knows the Lord will never leave him. God is David’s light, salvation and stronghold. Our children come to VBS to be filled and reminded that there is a God that loves them and is the reason why they never have to live in fear or worry. We serve our children to build their confidence in the Lord during even a short time like VBS.

I want to thank Pat Frost and all VBS teachers and volunteers who have been working together to serve the children of our community. Let us praise the Lord who gives us the opportunity to mentor and serve our children to help them experience God’s presence and His unfailing love. Amen.