



Message **Transcript**

Our Strong God

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As we continue our series in the psalms, we're going to talk today about our strong God. And it's one thing to know that God is strong, and it's another thing to experience the strength of our God. About 20 years ago, I taught at a camp up in superior national forest in literally the middle of nowhere. And I was there all summer long. And because I'm not an outdoorsman, I'm a little bit fearful of wildlife.

And up there, there were bear and elk and wolves, and I saw them and all this kind of stuff. And because I lived down by the lake, when this 19 year old kid rolled into camp that was going to be our maintenance guy, I invited him to come stay in my cabin. And the reason I invited him to stay in my cabin is because I didn't want to walk by myself at night. He thought it was because I was going to mentor him. I made up an excuse.

I'm like, hey, why don't you come down? We'll hang out this summer. So he moved in with me, and we were there. But every week, this camp would go from Monday all the way through Saturday. And on Sunday, we were there by ourselves.

And Sunday was laundry day, so it was Sunday. I was carrying all my clothes up

to the main cabin where I could put our laundry. And I'll never forget walking up that pathway. Never. I've been so scared of my whole life because I heard something.

To this day, I don't know what it was. I think it was a bear. I heard something rustle in the woods, and it sounded to me, in my mind's eye that a bear had turned its head and was staring right at me. It wasn't one of those moments. I paused very long and said, I wonder what that is.

It was an immediate drop of my laundry basket and a dead sprint as fast as I could up the quarter mile path to the place where the cabin was. And when I ran in there, I noticed Kyle. And Kyle was the forest ranger. And I ran in and saw him there, and I yelled, I'm like, kyle, there's a bear out there. There's a bear.

Get your gun and go kill it. That's what I yelled. And he started laughing. He's like, they won't hurt you unless you hurt them. I'm like, dude, I am never leaving this thing until you go out and kill that bear.

Well, it wasn't five minutes later, and the other door of the cabin opened, and tim, this young guy that was 19, he ran in the other side, and all he yelled was kyle, there's a bear out there. Get your gun. And I said, you saw it, too. He's like, no, I didn't see it. He goes, I heard it.

I'm like, kyle, I told you. I'm like, so you ran up here? He goes, no, dude. He goes, I ran back to my car and drove 2 miles around. There's no way I'm walking up that path ever again.

And I said this. I said, so you're scared here? He goes, yeah. He goes, the only reason I'm living with you is so we don't have to walk through the dark alone. And said, all right.

So depending upon who we walk with, makes a difference in our lives. And some of us, while we will admit that the lord is powerful, while we'll admit the Lord's strong, we live in fear. We live not realizing that the lord walks with us. Because things happen in our lives sometimes where even though we know God is strong and even though we know God is good, that we experience things where all of a sudden we begin to live in

fear, thinking we have to handle it ourselves. And if you're living in your life in fear right now in any area, I got a word for you this morning from the Lord.

If you open up your Bible says, psalm, chapter 27. Psalm, chapter 27.

Personally, one of my favorite psalms, David is going to talk about our strong God. And what we want to highlight are four different things that David tells us, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that the Lord provides so that when we're living in fear, we can recognize who our strong God is and receive from the Lord what he has for us. Notice in Psalm 27 how David starts.

He 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 evil doers 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. You see that word there? Confident. Confident.

Our strong God provides confidence. Confidence. That's the first thing that he provides. I mean, when we look into the face of fear, what we want more than anything else is confidence, to know that somebody else has it. David says, the Lord is my light and my salvation.

Salvation is he's my deliverer. He's delivered me from all sin, but he's also the light. I mean, all throughout the Bible, God is referred to as light, and in him there is no darkness at all. In the first chapter of John, chapter one and verse four, talking about Jesus, it said in him, in Jesus was life and the life was the light of men. It's the life.

Why does David have confidence in the Lord? Because the Lord is his life. The Lord has brought him from death to life. And so David asked the question, whom shall I fear? If the Lord is able to forgive all my sins, and the Lord is able to rescue me from everything, and the Lord is able to deliver me from hell, who shall I fear?

The answer is no one. The answer is no thing. The answer is nobody. I don't fear anything. He says, the Lord is the stronghold of my life.

I mean, that's where you really see this life. I mean, in poetry, this parallelism plays out light and salvation is the same as life. Now, what's this stronghold? What's this defense? Picture this.

Picture if you're a farmer or you're working out in the field as a shepherd and you spot a mountain lion and that mountain lion begins to pursue you. The Bible says the name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run into it and they are safe. Picture this big stronghold, this fortress, this tower in the middle of the field, and you're that shepherd or you're that farmer and you're going to run because you're no match for mountain lions. But you get inside that tower, you're safe.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The name of the Lord. His reputation is safety. His reputation is protection. That's who our Lord is.

David says, the Lord is my light and my salvation. Of whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector, the stronghold of my life. Whom shall I be afraid of? The answer is, I

don't live in fear because I have confidence that the Lord is who he says he is.

And David knows that the Lord walks with him. And when you know that you're walking with someone that's bigger than you, it makes a difference in your life. I remember being a freshman at the University of Illinois and I remember what it was like to be a freshman on a college campus and you're trying to figure out life and, you know, you're walking around different places. You have to know something about me. When I was in college, I was the smallest guy I hung out with by far.

I mean, I was six foot, 200 pounds. Maybe I weigh a little more than that now, but I was six foot, 200 pounds, and most of my friends were like, six 4240 or all the way up to, like, six 8300. And they liked me. And they hung out with me. So I can tell you, it didn't matter what time of day we hung out, and it really didn't matter where we were, and it really didn't matter who said anything about me.

I never felt fearful as a freshman in college, right? Because of who I walked with. Let me tell you something about our God. Let me tell you about something. He's like, he created the heavens and the earth.

He holds the stars in place. He's named every one of them. He's created all of the galaxies. He has and holds all power. There is no one but him.

And he says, I walk with you. And everywhere you go, there I am. And you can have total confidence is what David is talking about. No matter what comes my way, I am totally confident. Not me, but I'm totally confident in the Lord.

And as a king, he spells out what could happen to him. He says, when evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, he says, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. When people come against me as the king, I'm not worried because God's with me. They're the ones that are going to stumble and fall. He says, though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear.

Though war rise against me, yet I will be confident. What's a king most afraid of?
A king's most afraid of an army coming against him. King's most afraid of somebody

wanting to take his own life. And David's like, what would I worry about?

I'm confident in this, that God loves me, that he has my back. And even when people come against me because I belong to the Lord, they're the ones that are going to stumble and fall. I have total confidence in who I am. In the Lord, our strong God, provides confidence. If you really knew who you are in the Lord, if you really knew how much he loved you, you'd have confidence, too.

I mean, the Bible spells out that we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And the Bible points out from the time we're born that we're objects of his wrath. Us to understand who we are so that we can come to Jesus. Because the Bible says that Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world, but in order that we might be saved through him. Okay?

Jesus came because we were objects of wrath. And he said, I'll take the wrath for you. That's why he died on the cross. And when he rose from the dead in victory for all of us, who have believed in him. He says, I love you with an everlasting love.

If I loved you while you were still sinning and still rebellious, how much more now having a relationship with me do I love you? Have you ever paused to think about how much God loves you? It's not arrogant to do. It's what all the scriptures scream is that he loves you. He loves you with an unconditional love.

David was totally confident in the Lord's love for him, and we need to be as well. We need to believe that God has our best, because if we don't, we'll start believing lies. And when we start believing lies that God doesn't love us and doesn't have our best, we'll start living in fear. Here's some of the lies that I hear all the time in my own head and in the lives of others. Lies that go something like this, because I don't believe God loves me.

You'll never accomplish that. God's not gonna help you do that. You're never gonna get to blank. Fill in the blank. Hey, you're never gonna beat that illness.

Hey, you know what? Your marriage isn't gonna work. It's gonna end in divorce. Hey, you know what? That kid that's wayward.

They're gonna stay wayward. Hey, you know what? You're gonna be poor. Hey, you know what? You're gonna be miserable.

Hey, you know what? You're gonna be hated. You know what? I just want you to know you're ugly and you're unwanted. I want you to know your life was a mistake.

If you start believing those lies, even for a moment, they will take you down a path that God never intended. See, when God talks about us, the New Testament equivalent of psalm 27 one would be romans 8:31, which would say, if God is for us, who can be against us? Now, sometimes we think it's arrogant to think that God is for us. It's actually very humble. The reason God is for us is because we believe in his son.

I want to tell you something. God is 100% for Jeff Schwarzentrap. He holds my future in his hands, and he wants my best. Isaiah 50:4-7 says, no weapon formed

against you will prosper. No weapon set up against you will succeed.

That's what the Bible teaches. Can I believe that? Yeah, I totally believe that. There's nothing that's going to stand in the way from my God given destiny. Because God loves me so much that even when evildoers gather to put down what God started, in my heart, they can't succeed against my God.

I'm totally confident that God is going to fulfill his purpose. The Bible says, he who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it. Think about this for a moment. Psalm 139 says, God's thoughts for you outnumber the grains of sand.

They outnumber the grains of sand. I mean, think about what you've been doing over the past 24 hours. Let me tell you, one of the many things God's been doing is this. He's been thinking about you. He's been thinking about you.

And for those of you who have trusted in him, trusted in his son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins and his resurrection from the dead, he only thinks about

you. And he only thinks good thoughts about you. And he's in love with you. He can't stop thinking about you. That's why in ephesians 2:10, it says that God has prepared good works in advance for you, that you would walk in them, that God has a destiny for you, that God wants you to walk out.

Now think about this. If God's the creator of everything, when God created the world, how did he create, he created something out of nothing. And he made it beautiful. So good that his tagline on the end of every day was, ha ha, that's good. And his tagline on the end of all creation after he created everything, was, wow, that's very good.

Now think about the scriptures that say this in two corinthians 5:17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come. When you trust in Jesus Christ, although you look the same on the outside, really what God has done is he has recreated the inside, and he says it's very good. And I have purpose for you that only you can accomplish.

And I place you on the earth in this time to accomplish it. So would you please

have confidence in me? God says that I know what I'm doing, and I have best things for you. That's our God. That's what our strong God provides, is confidence.

Because if we don't believe in the confidence of the Lord, when circumstances begin to happen, we'll live in fear. When circumstances begin to happen, we'll get upset that maybe God isn't who he says he is. But David doesn't do that. David says, the Lord is my light and salvation. I'm not gonna fear anybody.

Lord's got my protection. I'm not gonna be afraid of anybody. This is just who I am. I'm 100% confident in who the Lord made me, and that he is going to finish what he began. Philippians one six says, he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion until the day of Christ that God promises, and we can have the confidence that what he started in us he will do.

But notice David. David doesn't just hang on to confidence. He wants something else. He wants comfort. Notice how this psalm continues.

He says, one thing I have asked of the Lord that I will seek after. Now, if you're the king and you have confidence in the Lord, and the Lord has anointed you, and your calling in the world is to be the king of all of God's people, and you could ask God for one thing. What would be the one thing that you'd ask God for? David says, here's the one thing I ask for, 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. This word inquire means to meditate on or to seek after.

The New Testament equivalent would be Matthew 633. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. David says, if I can ask one thing, here's what I want. I want to seek after God. That's what I want more than anything else.

That's where I get my comfort. See, it's more than just having this confidence that's out there. I want to tangibly experience the comfort of the Lord in the circumstances that I'm in now. When the psalmist write different psalms, sometimes we read them and we put song to them and they sound okay, but we don't really realize what they're saying. Psalm 42 says, as the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after thee.

In the same way that a thirsty deer would go after water, my soul longs after you. Psalm 63, verse one, says it this way, o God, you are my God. Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Has your soul and your flesh ever cried out to the Lord like that? That's what David's prayer is. David is saying, the only level of refreshment I know that I can ever get is to seek you and you alone. Psalm 84, one and two says it this way. How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts.

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. And he goes on to say this in verse ten, for a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. Here's how awesome your presence is to me.

He's saying, God, I would rather be the janitor in your company than the CEO. Because to be the janitor in your company and to get to spend every day with you would be awesome. Rather than being a CEO by myself, he's saying, God, I'd rather be the ball boy on your team than be the starting quarterback of my own. God, I just know that one day with you is better than a thousand days I could spend anywhere else. I mean, that's how precious you are to me.

And my soul longs for that. My flesh faints for that, and I thirst for that. God, that's what I want. David found his comfort when he thirsted for the Lord. David found his comfort when he sought the Lord.

Isn't it good to know those times where God is big and you are small? Your heart ever thirsted like that? I mean, God gives us little glimpses from time to time just how awesome he is and how small you are. Just the other day, I was riding my bike up on a ridgeline trail by my house, and when I came over the edge, I happened to be listening to you two on my earbuds, and I was listening to the song beautiful day. And as I came over, as the sun was coming up, I'm looking out and I'm seeing from all the way down from Pike's peak to Long's peak, and I'm driving up and I'm like, wow, God.

I mean, this is a little part of your creation, and you're huge, and I'm really, really small. And everything I'm thinking about, you've got under your control. And it was so comforting. Isn't it comforting to know that God is big and you're small? This is what David's saying.

I want to seek you, and I want to inquire of you, and I want to go after you, and I want to meditate on you. Because in life, where we get in the most trouble and where we live in the most fear is when we think our problems are bigger than our God. If you're living in fear right now, think about the thing you're fearful of and then realize this. God's bigger than that. He's stronger than that.

He's got that right. That's what David was saying, that's why God, better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere. Better is one day with you than a thousand elsewhere. Lord, I want that. I want that comfort.

I want to know that I can be with you and seek you. And one of the greatest gifts that God ever gave to us was prayer. He gave us prayer that we can seek him. And

prayer for us is not just, you know, rote routine saying things. We can speak and communicate with the living God and experience his comfort.

We're the only religion in the world that can do that. And the reason is we serve the only living God. Jesus Christ is the Lord. He has been and will always be, and we can communicate with him. Can I tell you why some of us don't pray very often?

I used to think there was like a formula to it, like, you know, acts. So you pray. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. That's a good way to start. And there's all these different formula and you can do this and you can do that.

But most of us are approached to God. The reason we have a hard time praying is because we have a wrong focus about how God thinks about us. See, if you're a believer and he loves you and he's got destiny for your life and he wants to see that fulfilled in you and he loves you and he wants to help you with whatever trial you're going to. It's different seeking him than if my view of God is. He's ticked off at me.

He's mad that I sinned the same way I sinned before. It's the 4000th time I've asked for, for this sin to be forgiven. He's mad, he's angry, he's disappointed, he's hurt. I mean, who wants to go spend time with a person like that? Do you have some people in your life that are disappointed in you no matter what you do?

I mean, do you yearn to spend hours with them every single day? No. We don't even want to spend holidays with them. We want to keep them at bay. Right?

God is a God who loves you and who has your best. That's why it's not a time thing. Like, hey, spend five minutes with the Lord. How much time would you be willing to spend with a person that cares so much about you and has the power to accomplish whatever he wants in and through you and loves you no matter what? And even when you sinned the worst is willing to forgive all that he says, come to me, all of you who are weary and heavy laden.

I'll give you rest. How awesome is that? God, do you have people like that in your life? I got people like that in my life. You have some people like that in your life.

You could pour out your whole heart to, you could pour it out with a crummy attitude. You could pour it out with a bad day and they would still say, hey, I love you. I get it. And they'd be encouraging to you, you got some people like that in your life? I got some people like that in my life.

This week I'm going to be in Chicago for a couple days and I knew I was going to be, so I texted a friend and asked if he and his wife could get dinner with my wife and I on Wednesday. And they said, yeah, not only we get dinner, why don't you come stay at our house? Done. We're there. I marked my calendar.

I know Wednesday is a good day because I know every time we get with this family, they always make Kim and I feel so good. And I want to spend more and more time with them. But I can't tell you this something. If I had the choice between spending Wednesday with them and spending with my savior, I'd pick my savior, right? Because he knows everything about me.

He knows all my ugly. He knows everything I've done. He knows everything I've been. He's like, jeff, I still love you, and I haven't changed my calling on your life. I haven't changed anything I want to do, and I got greatness for you.

Do you know he feels the same way about you? Do you know God loves you with an unconditional love like that. See, God wants you to feel and experience his comfort. Not only that, one of the things that's comfortable about God is that he protects us. Notice the next verse, verse five.

He says, for he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble. He will conceal me under the COIVID of his tent. He will lift me high up on a rock. God is the one who protects us from our enemies. When we go through things in life where we have quote unquote enemies or people that come against us, God's the one that wants to protect us from all that.

You don't need to protect yourself. God can handle it. He's not afraid. And yet from the time that we're young, we end up believing lies that make us fearful. I remember being a little kid, and I used to hang out with this girl that was across the

street.

She was a year older than me. Her name was Jenny. And I remember being like, five and Jenny would be six. And she used to have me do stuff like, hey, your house looks dirty. You should probably, you know, hose it down and clean it off for your mom and dad.

And so I would do it, you know, and then get in trouble. And, I mean, she would always paint my mind with. With lies. And I'll never forget, there was. There was one day, I mean, I remember this when I was five years old.

She told me that the boogeyman was coming to our neighborhood on that very night. I didn't know what the boogeyman was. I still don't know what the boogeyman is, if somebody can define it for me. I just knew the boogeyman was bad and he was coming to get me. And then she went on to tell me.

It just so happened that the boogie man was unable to go through houses made of brick. It just so happened her house was made of brick. My house, on the other hand, was made of wood. And she said, you know, you might want to talk to your parents because the boogeyman can come through wood. And I remember having, like, a 25 or 30 minutes discussion with my dad, pleading in tears, begging him to let me spend the night at Jenny's house because the boogie man was coming.

And he needed to understand very clearly that the boogeyman couldn't come through bricks, but he could come through wood. And we had a wood house. My dad didn't buy it, right? But I was fearful. And you say, well, Jeff, that was when you were five.

I mean, how stupid is that, right? Okay, think about what you're afraid of. If Jesus were standing here saying, hey, I got this. How silly would it be what you're fearing? Right?

It'd be even sillier if Jesus, the God of the universe in all of his glory, says, I got this. You don't need to live in fear. You don't need to do that anymore. And you saw

him and all his friends be like, that's silly. Don't need to worry about it.

Don't cry those tears anymore. Don't worry about it. I got this, right? God is our protector. He gives us comfort because he protects us.

And then notice this, he elevates us. David says in verse six, 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. I will sing and make melody to the Lord. David knows that it's through his enemies that he's going to be lifted up.

Now, this is a really interesting thing, because for most of us, we think that God is sovereign. We would say, yeah, he's in control of everything. I get it. But we think when all good things happen, it's God. And when all bad things happen, it's the devil.

And you got to realize some things. God's sovereign over all things. So there's. Sometimes God allows things to happen, and God will never allow more in our life than

what we can handle, but he allows it to come so that we. We can grow in our faith and he can even get more glory.

I mean, you think about the Bible stories. Think about, like, Moses. How do you know how awesome Moses is? You don't know that Moses is awesome. Other than if Pharaoh's in his life, it's because Pharaoh's in his life that Moses is awesome.

And every time throughout Moses life, he's called to go to Egypt. If he would have gone to Egypt and said, let my people go, and Pharaoh would have said, okay, here they are. Go. We'd never even hear about Moses because we'd read the Bible and be like, I could have Done that. But every time he says, let my people go, Pharaoh hardens his heart, makes things more difficult on the Israelites, makes all the Israelites hate Moses even more.

And it happens time and time and time again. And after the 10th plague, when God finally slays the firstborn of everyone in all of Egypt, and the Israelites plunder Egypt and they leave. I mean, they get out to where they're to the red sea, and it's all good until Pharaoh hardens his heart Again. And when Pharaoh hardens his heart

again, he sends the largest army, the most powerful army in the whole world. After them.

And what does Israel say? The 2 million of them. Ugh. It would have been better if we would have died back in Egypt. This is ridiculous.

Moses, why'd you bring us out here? I mean, if you like grumbling and complaining, Moses would have been the best job in the world. That's all people did, right? So what happens? God says, Moses, I got this.

He protected him from behind. He said to Moses, here's what I want you to just hold out your staff. That's all he did. I mean, this is how. Watch.

Watch. This is what he did. That was his big move, right? And he did that. And God did all the work and parted the Red Sea.

And they all walked through. And then just at the right time, God peeled back his protection. And as all Egypt went into the water, God swallowed them all. And we know Moses is the greatest leader in all of Israel. What did he do?

He did that, right? So God says, pharaoh, it was for this very purpose that I raised you up that I might get my glory through you. So Moses is the greatest leader in Israel's history. Who's getting all the glory? God.

What about David? Did he have any enemies in his life? We wouldn't even know about who David was if there wasn't anybody as Goliath. I mean, if Goliath hadn't come on the scene, we wouldn't know about David. It's through his enemy where David's looking and says, what's that philistine doing in our land?

He doesn't belong here. And what's David's big trick? He can't even wear the armor. He can't carry the sword. What's he have, a slingshot?

I mean, I don't know what the percentage is, but to sling a stone and kill a nine foot giant, it's not going to happen. I mean, we don't hear many tragedies in war from people who have been hit with a rock, right? But that wasn't where the power came from. It was God launching the stone. David said, you come at me with sword and spear, but I come at you in the name of the Lord almighty.

I'm coming at you for the Lord's reputation. Temptation. God used the rock to knock him out, and then David cut off his head. And then everybody's like, David's awesome. Why was David awesome?

Because he trusted that the Lord was going to show up. When you have enemies in your life and we have things that go wrong in your life and trials in your life, just understand this sometimes. God ordained that he's allowing to happen to strengthen you and to get greater glory through you. It's through the testing of your faith that you grow and experience the Lord's comfort in a greater and greater way. And when you do, the response is normal.

I'll sing praises to the Lord. When I see the Lord come through like that, I'm

jumping up and down, and that's what God wants from us. And most of us would think, well, this is where the psalm should end, man. I totally believe. I have confidence in the Lord.

I have comfort in the Lord. I'm going home. But I love David's humanity in this because the third thing David looks for is companionship. He wants companionship because notice what he says next. You would think David's next words would be, I got this.

I know this here's, that's not what he says. He says, hear, o Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me. Lord, listen to me. I'm gonna pour out my heart right now. I'm gonna cry to you right now.

Yeah, I'm confident you can do this. Yeah, I have comfort in who you are, but I'm human still, and I need to pour out my heart before you do. You know, God wants us to do that. See, a lot of believers think, well, I have confidence in the Lord. I have comfort in the Lord.

If God wants to do it, he'll do it. No, the Bible says you have not because you ask, not just because you know what's stirring in your heart. Ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be open.

Ask him. Pour out your heart. Just because I know the Lord's confident. If you have a wayward kid that's not walking with the Lord, you have confidence that the Lord can bring them back. I'm comforted that the Lord loves them more than me.

But what am I doing? My heart hurts, and I'm pouring it out, saying, God, bring them back home. I believe you can, but I'm hurting right now. Right. I have confidence that the Lord can heal marriages.

I have comfort that he will. But, Lord, I'm pouring out my heart. Lord, do something. It's a huge struggle right now that's pouring out your heart. That's exactly what David was doing.

Just because David believed the Lord, he didn't lose his humanity. Just because David knew the Lord didn't mean he didn't have hurt and pain in his life. I mean, David had hurt and pain in his life. And so he's calling out to the Lord and he's saying, lord, hear me. Be gracious to me.

Lord, answer me. I need to hear you. I need to know that you're in this with me. You've said, seek my face. My heart says to you, your face.

Lord, do I seek. What did David want more than anything else? He wanted the presence of the Lord, not just his hand, not just what the Lord could give. Lord, do this for me. Bring my daughter back.

Lord, do this for me. Heal my marriage. Lord, do this for me. Provide more resources. Lord, do this for me.

Heal my illness. Here's what David was saying. Lord, my heart is just for you. As long as I have you, I can get through anything. I will seek your face.

I want you. If I have you, I'm comforted. But, Lord, I'm pouring out my heart. I need you I need to know that you're walking with me. I need to know that I'm not alone.

I know it in my head. I need to feel it in my heart. That's what he's doing. Then he says this. Hide not your face from me.

Turn not your servant away in anger. O you who have been my help, cast me off and not forsake me. O God of my salvation says, hey, God, don't be angry with me. Don't forsake me. I got good news.

In the New Testament, all God's anger was poured out on the cross. For those

of you who have trusted in Jesus, and if you haven't received the forgiveness of your sins, I encourage you. Trust in Jesus. Today he died in your place to take the wrath of God the father, on your behalf, so that you don't have to worry about God's anger anymore. It's poured out on his son.

Don't forsake me, Lord. Hey, we don't need to worry about that one either, because the Bible says, never will I leave you. Never will I forsake. When Jesus gave the great commission, he said, I'll be with you always till the very end of the age. I'm not going anywhere.

You belong to me. As a matter of fact, I'll be back to get you because I love you like that. That's the kind of God I am. That's what David was praying. Remind me of that God.

He says, for my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me. In. A better translation would be, even if my father and mother would forsake me, the Lord will take me in. I mean, what he's saying is, even if those closest to me would reject me, maybe it's my mom and dad. Maybe it's a coach, maybe it's a friend.

Maybe it's a grandma. Even if they would reject me, Lord, you never will. I know that about you. See, I want to encourage you. And the way I want to encourage you is this.

In John 15, Jesus referred to his disciples as friends. Jesus wants to be your friend. Jesus wants to walk with you. He wants you to know that it's different between just coming into a religious gathering and hearing about how awesome God is and having some confidence in that and having comfort in that versus the companionship. That says, now, when I leave these doors everywhere I go this week, there God is.

He's right there with me. He wants to communicate with me. He wants to talk with me. He wants to go with me. He wants me to help.

He wants to help me make decisions. That's who our God is. And that's why I want to tell you this. When David starts to pray, teach me your way, o Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. It's very similar to prophecy.

Proverbs three, five, six. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him. He'll make your path straight.

God, lead me. Teach me what you want. I want to hear what you want. And then he says, give me not up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. If you walk with the Lord, there will always be people in your life that are naysayers.

It's just a fact. It's okay. But you don't need to fight them. You don't need to say anything about them. They're just there.

You just keep walking with the Lord and be comforted in the Lord. Now, this is why I'm telling you that I don't make a big deal about how you spend time with the Lord. It's that you spend time with the Lord. Now, some of you that are early risers and like to drink coffee, you like to tell people that the way to do Bible study is get up

really, really early, pull out your bible, start highlighting and underlining, and have your of coffee there. Okay?

That's never, ever worked for me. It doesn't work for me. I don't like to sit still very well. I like to be on the move. When I like to talk to God, I like to walk around much like I'm doing here.

When I spend time with the Lord, there's times I like to be quiet. But there's also times I like to be loud because that's how the Lord made me. Okay? So when I have my best time with the Lord, I'm by myself. Because if I do it, like at my in laws house and they're upstairs and I'm downstairs, I would scare them.

If I do it at my house, I'll get interrupted. I have to find a place where I can get alone and be who I am so that I can sing praises and clap my hands and call out to the Lord and pour out my heart very verbally because that's how I experienced the Lord. So I was telling Pastor Mark, I'm like, man, do you. I need to get away. We were just talking about it.

He's like, I know a guy that's got a place not far up in the foothills in Evergreen. He goes, why don't you go spend a day there? I'm like, done. So this Wednesday, I went up there and he left. After he showed me where the place was, he pulled out around 09:00.

I'm telling you, it was awesome because there was nobody for miles. I mean, there's some chipmunks that may have been a little scared when they heard me pray, but that was about it. And I spent time just calling out to the Lord. I spent time journaling the things I needed to journal. I poured out my heart.

I laughed, I got angry. I just kind of poured it all out. And God met me so powerfully there and just began to download all these things in my heart and all my life. By 11:00 on Wednesday morning, I was ready to take on the world. He was reconfirming my calling.

He was sharing good things about our church. He was showing me things that were off that I can't wait to tell you. And all these different things. He was like, yes,

yes. Because better is one day in his courts than a thousand elsewhere.

There's nowhere I would have rather been than up in that house that day. And you know what? God wants to spend time with you. Just like that. God wants to meet you.

He wants to confirm his love for you. He wants to affirm his gift in you. He wants to let you know how special and unique you are to his kingdom agenda. And he wants to pour down his love. But we need to be honest.

We need to have his companionship. I mean, name one relationship you have that's really, really good, where you're not authentic. Name one where you can be fake all the time. Where somebody asks you, how you doing? And it's always fine.

Somebody asks you, well, how's your day going? It's always good. And somebody asks you how you're doing. And you're like, I'm totally awesome. Cause I

always am.

I mean, how many relationships do you have like that, that are really, really deep and good? The answer is zero. Your best relationships that you have, there's a heart level to the relationship where you can be vulnerable with everything you are. Are you like that with the Lord? Companionship comes through you being totally honest in every venue and vehicle with the Lord for him to hear your heart.

And by the way, he already knows it. He knows if you're hurt. He knows if you're upset. God didn't ask you to be passive and sit back and be like, well, I know I'm upset. And if God wants me to not be upset, I'm sure he'll take that away.

I know I'm sad, but if God wants to remove my sadness, I know he'll do it. I'm just a Christian. I'm just going to get through life. I mean, that's not what God wants. Read the psalms, the psalmist.

Pour out their heart before the Lord. That's where they get their companionship.

God wants to walk with you in every area. God wants to hear your heart. And the more you are authentic with God, the more he will pour into your life.

Now, I love these first three things because if I'm confident in the Lord and I'm experiencing his comfort and I have his companionship where I can walk with him, it allows me to do what the Lord wants me to do. You know what the Lord wants me to do? He wants me to take steps of faith. You know how I do that final c. It's courage.

It's courage. Notice what David says. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord. Be strong.

Let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord. Why does David have courage? Because he's aware of his confidence and how awesome the Lord is. He's comforted by him.

He's now poured out his entire heart to him and has companionship. And now

he's saying, because I know you're going with me now I have all the courage to do what you want me to do. Now, verse 13 could be said in a lot of different ways. It's difficult to translate, but some ways you could translate it is now I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord. Or, oh, had I not believed that I would look upon the goodness of the Lord, the new american standard would say, oh, how I would have despaired had I not believed I would look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of living.

Here's what David's saying. David's saying this, I believe I'm going to see the goodness of the Lord now. Now, most of us as christians would say, hey, the goodness is coming. When we die, we'll be in his presence and the sweet by and by. And that's awesome.

But what's he going to do for me now? Many Christians would say, it doesn't matter. He's already forgiven all your sins. Who cares if he does anything good for you now? David cared.

I care. We serve the same God that David served, the God of yesterday, today

and forever. He's always been the same. Here's where David's courage comes from. David's courage does not come from.

One day when I die, I know you'll take me. David says, oh, had I not believed that I would look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, I would have been totally discouraged if I didn't believe I was going to see your goodness in my lifetime, I'd be totally discouraged if I didn't see you showing up in that circumstance. In other words, if your marriage is messed up a little bit, and by the way, everybody's marriage is messed up a little bit from time to time, if you didn't believe that God had the power to heal it in this life, you would be totally discouraged. If you went through heartache and pain in your family and you didn't believe God could heal it in this life, you'd be totally discouraged, right? If you're a Cubs fan and you didn't believe God could take him to the World Series in your lifetime, you'd be discouraged, right?

I believe I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. I believe I'm going to see it now. See, faith is walking. Walking with Jesus is walking by faith and not by sight. It's believing that God's going to do what he says he's going to do, even when all the circumstances and everybody else around me say he's never going to do that.

How do you believe that he's going to do that? Because I have faith. I have courage that he's going to do that. That's why I love this passage. That's why David is saying, wait for the Lord.

Now here's what waiting means. Waiting means to wait on. Last night, after our Saturday evening service, I went to a restaurant, and the waiter didn't have the understanding of what wait actually meant. He thought waiting actually meant that we should sit there for a very long time without him talking to us, that we should wait on him. But see, being a good waiter, you shouldn't do that.

Just in case you're a waiter, let me help you out. A good waiter waits on us. They come provide menus. They come ask us what our drink orders would want. They tell us about the menu.

They answer questions. They take our order. They provide food. I mean, that's what waiting on means. Waiting on the Lord does not mean sitting on your backside

hoping God will do something.

Waiting on the Lord means I'm actively taking little steps of faith, trusting that God's going to show up in the areas that I'm praying about. That's what it means to wait on the Lord. Be strong, okay? Let your heart take courage. Yes, wait on the Lord.

It means as you take little steps of faith, trust this God's going to show up. And do you know when God shows up? God shows up, right? When God wants to show up. Did you know that?

He doesn't show up when we want him to. Or it wouldn't be faith. Because if we wanted God to show up when we want him to, it would be before we trust God. If we needed resources, we want to see the resources first, then we'll act on faith, right? If we wanted to see God show up in our work in a certain way, we'd want to see how he's going to do that.

Then we'll take steps of faith. God doesn't work that way. God says, hang on, I'm on the way. Just trust that I'm on the way. Now, I love this psalm because all throughout my life since being a christian Christian, I've seen God work in this way.

And the greatest stories in the Bible, the ones that you love, all function like this. Remember the roman centurion that came to Jesus? He wasn't a jew, he wasn't of the house of Israel. And he came and said, hey, Jesus, one of my soldiers is sick. And Jesus said, okay, I'll come with you.

He says, well, you don't need to. He goes, I lead an army. He goes, I know how authority works. I tell this guy to go there and he goes there. I tell this guy to go there and he goes there.

You're the king of the world. You just give the word. I know it's done. You do it however you do it. And what does Jesus say?

Never have I seen such faith in all of Israel. Go, your servant's healed. And he was healed at that hour. In other words, the servant was saying, the centurion was saying, I don't even need to see it. I just believe it because I know who you are and you can do whatever you say you're going to do.

So I'm just trusting you to do it. I mean, we love that story. We love the story about when the disciples were on the boat after the feeding of the 5000. They'd been rowing all night long, you know, seven, eight, 9 hours on the boat. Jesus told him to go to Bethsaida.

He went up and prayed all night and now he's coming back and he's on his way to Bethsaida. And Jesus is making better time walking on the water than they are straining at the oars. And so Peter, once they've decided it's not a ghost, and they see it's Jesus, and Peter sees it's easier for Jesus to get there walking rather than straining on the oars with all the disciples, what's Peter blurred out? Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water, I'll come. I'd rather walk with you than sit here all night and paddle.

And Jesus says one word, come. So what's Peter do? He gets out of the boat and he walks on the water. And we're like, wow, it's awesome. What did he have?

He had confidence in the Lord. He had comfort in the Lord's words. He knew the Lord was his companion and what, he took steps of courage. Now we'll make fun of Peter because he didn't faith long enough, and he didn't keep his courage long enough. But there's only two people in recorded history that ever walked on the water, and it's Jesus and Peter, right?

See, God calls us to things and asks us to take steps of courage, and then he'll show up. I remember when I first went into ministry, I had to raise \$3,500 to go to the training that I was going to go to up in Minnesota. \$3,500 was as insurmountable as any amount of money that I knew at the time. And worse yet, I didn't know how to do it. And the Lord's like, just write a letter to everybody you know that's a Christian and tell them what you're doing and trust me, and give him a return address and let him send a check.

I'm like, okay. So I did two days before I left, guess how much money I had.

\$3,300. \$200 short. Called my Bible study leader.

He's like, hey, listen, I want to give you \$100. Cool. \$3,400. Called another friend is in my Bible study. He's like, I'll give you \$100.

He goes, we'll complete it. I said, awesome. I'm like, God, this is incredible. So I went to the Bible study, drove 90 miles to the Bible study I was at because it was the place where I went to college. And Bible study leader said, hey, I'll write you a check at the end of church, at the end of the Bible study.

And the other guy was going to give me a \$100. Guess what? He didn't show up. So I'm trying to debate. Do I call him and be like, hey, really missing you tonight.

Are you going to come bring that hundred dollars? And I didn't know what to do, so I just called him and said, hey, are you coming tonight? He's like, no, I can't come. I said, hey, listen, I leave tomorrow for Minnesota. Just wanted you to know it's been good to be in study with you.

He's like, oh, yeah, the check. I forgot to bring you the check. I'll come. So he came. So at the end of the Bible study, both these guys are writing out checks.

And I got tears in my eyes because I'm realizing, man, God is so good. He knew the exact amount of money that I needed. And so I went out to my car and I knew I was going to see these guys for a while. I'm like, I better make sure they dated it and signed it right and all this stuff. And so I looked at the first check for my Bible study leader.

It's a \$100. Look at the next check. Everything was signed, 100 was crossed out and it said 1000 and it was signed. I'm like, what? So I fold it back up and went inside.

I'm like, dude, I only need \$100. You made this for a thousand? He goes, I know. He goes, but that money will mean more to you than it does to me. He goes, just use it for the Lord any way you want.

And I was like, blown away of the Lord's generosity. That was the first time I saw the Lord work like that. Second time I saw the Lord work, like that was when he called me to seminary and I didn't want to go. I was like, lord, I didn't even like undergrad. I don't want to go to grad school.

And by the way, Lord, if I go, I'm not paying for it at all. So if I don't have the money, I'm dropping out. Do you know I always had enough money. You know, the Lord provided me. When I graduated, I was totally debt free.

You know, I started a ministry. It was the exact same way. I'm like, lord, I'm not going to go out and beg people for money. If they want to give to our ministry, they can ask me how to do it and do it, but I'm not going to promote it. I'm not going to do anything.

If we run out of money, I'm done. Do you know we never ran out of money? Do you know we came out and planted a church and said, hey, where are we going to get

the money to do this. You know, the Lord always provided. So when it came time for us to purchase this building, we had to raise \$1.73 million in a week.

Can I tell you something? I had total confidence that the Lord was going to do it. I had total comfort that the Lord had shown me. I knew, companion wise, me and Jesus. He had told me what to do.

And I preached on it with all courage on that Sunday, knowing that six days later, we were going to gather in this building to collect the money. Now, the Sunday that I preached, total courage. It was awesome. I didn't have courage. After I preached.

By Wednesday that week, you know what I was thinking about? We ain't going to get it. Fear just crippled me. Thursday, I was in my office. I was almost crying tears.

I'm like, this is horrible because we're not going to come anywhere near that \$2 million. And when we don't, you know what's going to happen. The people that gave

their money, that saw we didn't get it are going to want their money back. And when I don't, they're going to leave our church. We're going to have this huge church split, but we're not even big enough to split yet.

And this is going to be awful. I mean, we're going to miss this thing by a country mile. And you know what I did? God took me to psalm 27, and I started reading through it. And as I was reading through it, the Lord started encouraging me and the confidence and the comfort and the companionship I had with him.

He said, jeff, did you hear me? And I. Yeah, but, lord, it's Saturday night. People are going to come to this thing. We're not going to have enough.

And the Lord was just using verse 14 and 13, saying, wait for me. Jeff, there's one thing you're forgetting. I'm coming to your meeting on Sunday, Saturday night, and it's finished. And I've wept in my office. So I knew on Thursday we got the money.

I just didn't know where it was coming from. So when the elders went to count

the money that Saturday night, I didn't go with them. I'm like, I'm not gonna touch the money. I'll find out tomorrow with everybody else. But I already knew we had it.

Cause God told me that we did. What's the big deal? The big deal is this. God has places in your life. He wants you to take steps of faith.

Sometimes they're really teeny, but they'll seem big. Cause even if it starts the first time you take a step of faith. It'll feel like a big step of faith. Even if it doesn't to somebody else, it will to you. And the more baby steps you take, the bigger your stride gets in trusting the Lord.

And God wants you to take steps of courage, because God wants to show you how fast. Do you know that there's no line in heaven when you get there for people that can say, I trusted you completely and you let me down. I mean, there's not even a line forming for that. God's testimony is, I always come through. I always provide.

I always fulfill everything that I put on your heart. That's the God that I am. You know how that fires me up? Cause that's what he wants to do in your life. That's what he wants to do with you.

Where is God bubbling those things in your heart, where he wants you to take a step of faith? The more little steps of faith you take, the more you'll see. See God show up sometimes. You're like, well, God, if you give me a big \$2 million dream, I'll do it. He's like, here, I will.

But here's what I want you to do. First, I want you to go tell that person you were sorry for the way you treated them. I don't want to take that step of faith. Take that one. Be faithful in the little things, and God will make you faithful in the big things.

And here's why I love that. Because the more and more you see steps of faith and you see God show up, God begins to do an awesome thing in your life. Oh, how I would have despaired had I not believed I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Our God's strong. Our God's a provider.

Our God accomplishes everything. Where are you fearful today? Where would you say, I don't know, that God could show up? Because God would want to reaffirm the dream in your heart that he's placed there, that he wants you to know, oh, yes, I can. And he's telling you this.

I know you're fearful, but hold on. Help is on the way. Hold on. I'm coming. Hold on.

I'll be there. Everything I put in your heart's what I want you to accomplish. You just keep taking steps of faith, and I promise you, at just the right time, I'll show up. And when I do, guess what? I'm gonna get all the glory as you tell people how awesome I am.

That's who I am. And see, God doesn't wanna just do things in your life so you can be like, look at how awesome he is or look at how awesome she is when you brag on the Lord who gets the glory, the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's what he wants in

each and every one of us because he loves us. Trust him. Take the step of faith God's calling you to take.

He will indeed show up. Right. Whom shall you be afraid of? Nobody. Who shall you fear?

Nobody. Why? Because if God is for you, who can be against you? Amen. Amen.

Would you stand with me? Lord Jesus, we give you all the praise, glory and honor for this day. Lord, as we sing about your strength and your goodness we're reminded there is no other and that you have our back. And we give you all the glory in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.