

# SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 08.12.24

**PREACHER: NATHAN BEAN**

PSALMS OF HOPE:  
ANCHORING TO GOD'S BEAUTY

## BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

*BEING, THINKING & DOING*

**Conviction of a Disciple:** As we journey in our growth into Christlikeness, we become more resilient, anchoring ourselves in God and learning to trust Him with our whole self, even in the midst of trials

### OVERVIEW

Psalm 27 calls us to anchor our hearts in God's light and salvation, finding Him beautiful and longing to dwell in His presence.

### ACTION

**Step 1:** Reflect: What areas of your life feel overwhelming, and how can anchoring yourself in God's light and salvation bring confidence and peace?

**Step 2:** Commit: What does it look like for you to seek God's presence daily, not out of obligation, but out of delight in His beauty?

**Step 3:** Act: Identify one specific way you can dwell with God this week, whether through worship, scripture, or prayer. Then make space to gaze upon His beauty.

# THOUGHT

## SCRIPTURE: PSALM 27

As we enter into the Advent season, going to the Psalms might seem like an odd option. However, during the 'Road to Emmaus' event in Luke 24, Jesus shows these forlorn disciples how the entire story of Scripture - from the Law to the Prophets and even mentioning the Psalms specifically - were pointing forward to the hope of His coming. Psalm 27 resonates deeply with the Advent themes of hope, expectant waiting, and longing to dwell with God.

David writes this psalm from a place of exile, imagining the worst possible scenarios: enemies encamped against him, armies rising up, war breaking out, and even his own family abandoning him. And yet he concludes, "Even then I will be confident" in the LORD (v.3). This isn't just a moment of wishful thinking. David's confidence comes from anchoring himself in the Lord—his light and his salvation.

This is one of the only times in Scripture that God is referred to specifically as someone's "light." David poetically links light and salvation, showing us that God's light overcomes the darkest situations we face. Advent reminds us of this truth: the Light has come into the world, and the darkness cannot overcome it (John 1:5).

In this psalm, we also see that while David clearly has faith and hope, he doesn't ignore his feelings. Throughout the Psalms, he acknowledges his times of distress and fear, naming them and placing them before God. Our journey of faith is not one of pretending or 'putting on a bold face'. At the same time, our emotions should have full control over us. We can think of it like this - emotions should be welcomed into our car, but they don't need to have control of the steering wheel. Instead, while giving a voice to our inner experience, we still anchor ourselves to the Lord, who is our stronghold and our safe place in life's most challenging times.

However, it's in these challenging times that cause people to first come to seek God. This is totally fair and reasonable! But our desire for an encounter with God shouldn't stay there. At first, many come to God because they need something—protection, healing, provision. But David shows us the heart of true worship, which is seeing God as BEAUTIFUL and not just useful. Beauty is a far better motivator than obligation. If we don't see the beauty of the Lord, our relationship with Him may feel like an obligation rather than a delight. Ultimately, this is the difference between a religion for God and a relationship with God.

This idea leads to the most striking thing about Psalm 27, which is David's singular focus. "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple" (v.4). David's longing to "gaze on the beauty of the Lord" reflects a heart that doesn't just want what God can give but desires God Himself. Advent is a season to rekindle this longing. Jesus came so we could abide with Him and dwell in His presence as He abides and dwells with us—not out of duty, but out of love.

The Psalms capture the fullness of the Christian experience: waiting, hoping, struggling, and rejoicing. In this Advent season, may we echo David's prayer to dwell with the Lord forever. As we wait for Jesus' return, may we anchor our hearts in His light and salvation, confident that His beauty and presence are enough to carry us through any challenge or suffering we face

## DISCUSSION

1. How does seeing God as "light" and "salvation" give us confidence in difficult circumstances?
2. What does it mean to find God beautiful, and how can this shape how we relate to Him?
3. How can our Connect Group encourage one another to dwell with God and seek His presence regularly?

## PRAYER

Lord,

You are our light and our salvation, and we place our confidence in You. Teach us to see Your beauty and seek Your presence above all else. Anchor our hearts in Your love, and help us trust You in every circumstance.

Amen.