

## Psalm 27 – Be of Good Courage in the LORD! (2 of 2)

**IV. The Obedience of the Courageous (vv 7-8)** – What the Word of God says, every child of God must reply, "Amen." We live in a time when obedience to the Word of God begins and stops at lip service. This act of mockery and hypocrisy is so common today that when it is committed there is no conviction of wrong doing! It is like driving above the speed limit along the highway because others are driving above the limit! It becomes an accepted norm. Can the police catch everyone who drives beyond the speed limit? The psalmist is describing a refrain that was personal and dear to his heart. It was a genuine and sincere obedience which was expressed and experienced. He cried with utmost sincerity to the LORD his Jehovah God to hear him. All he wanted was to obey whatever the Word of God is teaching. The LORD says to cry to Him in times of trouble, thus the psalmist cried to the LORD in his time of trouble. He did so by faith knowing that he will be heard. But that does not mean that he can approach God perfunctorily and with coldness of heart. His cry to the LORD was with the deepest sense of need and submission, like a child in need crying to his father for deliverance and help. The word "cry" has the idea of crying to someone by calling out the person's name. In this context the LORD's name was being called which is the emphasis, not the manner of crying.

The basis for the psalmist's cry is not his right or position but that he has no right at all. He cried to the LORD for mercy. This word is more commonly translated in the KJV as gracious rather than mercy. When it is translated as mercy as is the case here, it has the idea of one who feels undeserving of deliverance from the trouble that he is enduring. When a sinner experiences persecution in any form, he may feel that perhaps he deserves to be persecuted as a sinner in general. In this particular context, the psalmist knew he was being persecuted for Christ's sake and he had not done anything wrong. Persecution has a strange way of affecting a believer's thinking. The basis for God hearing a believer's cry for help or for that matter any kind of prayer, is never because of what the believer has done and thus deserves to be heard by God. It is always one of undeserving grace or mercy. The psalmist pleaded for God's mercy to hear his cry for help so that the persecution would cease. Enduring persecution does not mean that we do not cry for the persecution to stop. It does not mean that as innocent Joseph languished in prison doing the will of God in his life, he should not ask to be released from prison (cf. Gen 40:1-23). Using synthetic parallelism in verse 7, the psalmist cried to the LORD to intervene and bring an end to the persecution. The LORD did.

**Verse 8** (synthetic parallelism) --- The psalmist said that he was simply doing exactly what the LORD asks His children to do. The LORD says to seek His face and that is exactly what the psalmist did here. The word "seek" simply means "to search out." It is usually used with this meaning in relation to God and also used in the context of worship or prayer as in this instance. To search out the face of the LORD means to cry to Him in time of need. The

psalmist said that his heart has said to the LORD, "Thy face, LORD, will I seek." This is the best and only way every child of God ought to pray. Like a little child, we must have complete trust in the LORD and do whatever the LORD says with absolute sincerity. Do not play games with God or try to read between the lines or pretend with God. God speaks simply and directly. There are some Christians who try to play semantic games with the LORD. The result is that they deceive themselves and the Word of God is misinterpreted and misapplied. They fool themselves into thinking that they are doing God's Word when in fact they are doing what they want. To seek God's face means to obey God's Word. To obey God's word means to study and understand God's Word. We cannot obey what we do not know or understand. To seek God's face means to pray without ceasing. In times of adversity, seek the LORD. In times of plenty and ease, seek the LORD! Seek the LORD by obeying His word and by leaning upon Him every waking moment of our life.

**V. The Confidence of the Courageous – (vv 9-10)** – Using synthetic parallelism again, the psalmist cried to the LORD to not hide His face from him when he cried to Him, as if He was angry with him. In order to make this plea, the psalmist had to ensure that he did not regard any iniquity in his heart. He had to repent of all his known sins. Whatever sins he might have committed would cause God to be angry with him and thus his prayer would not be heard by God. The psalmist did not cry to the LORD based upon a personal untrue relationship. It was a relationship based upon the LORD's revealed truth. The psalmist knew this. He prayed based upon God's revealed truth and a life of holiness. This is the only basis for confidence in prayer after salvation.

When Israel made the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai (cf. Exo 32:10), God was very angry with Israel and wanted to put Israel off. A child of God must not make the LORD angry now that he is born again in Christ. He must try his utmost to ensure that the LORD is pleased with him. The fear of God in his heart is the beginning of wisdom which will keep him constantly on the path of righteousness. This avails him access into the very throne of God's grace and mercy and ensures that all his prayers will be heard by God. The psalmist used the phrase "put not away." This does not refer to a lost relationship. The psalmist was not afraid that the LORD would cast him off as if he was no longer His child. The psalmist knew that he could not lose his salvation. It was the fear of not having his prayer heard by God, i.e. the fear of losing fellowship with the LORD. God's standard of holiness as the basis for hearing the prayers of His children has not changed. It remains the same today for all God's children. The reason is that the LORD's character remains immutable and this will always be the way that the LORD relates to His children when they pray.

The psalmist acknowledged that the LORD had been his help in the past. He had experienced the LORD coming to his aid according to answered prayers. What a wonderful testimony! Therefore, the psalmist continued to cry to the LORD to not leave him, i.e. to not

turn His face away from him and forsake him to his persecution. Loneliness and desertion by people in times of trials for the sake of Christ is one thing, but to be deserted by the LORD is too hard to bear.

The psalmist emphasized his cry for help by calling "God" for the first time in this psalm. The use of "God" means to cry to the LORD for His power and strength to help. Whenever the name "the LORD" is used, the emphasis is on the covenantal relationship based upon God's promises. The use of "God" or "elohiym" means to cry for the power of God. This is emphasized even further when the psalmist used a genitival construction calling the LORD the God of his salvation! The psalmist says that the LORD had been the God of his salvation and that He be the God of his salvation again! The psalmist contrasted the significance of the LORD's help in time of need in the next verse.

**Verse 10** (synthetic parallelism) -- The confidence of the courageous is in God and not in man, not even in the people that he can trust and depend on the most, like parents. The parents of a child will never desert the child regardless of what the child has done. This is the love of parents! It is strong and unique and lasts a lifetime. In the eyes of the parents the child will never cease to be their child regardless of age. This is the effect of parenting that comes upon all loving and responsible parents. The psalmist was not saying that his parents had forsaken him as if they did not love or care for him anymore. They could very well have been impotent to help because the psalmist's enemies were too powerful or strong. When Daniel and his three friends were taken into exile, what could their parents do? They were not able to do anything because Nebuchadnezzar's armies were too powerful. In this sense, Daniel and friends could say that their parents had forsaken them. It could also be that the psalmist's parents had died. Death is not something anyone can control. A little child will cry for his parents who have died. He will feel forsaken! The thrust of this verse is that even the love of parents, which is the strongest on earth, does not guarantee that we will not be forsaken. The psalmist knew that the LORD would never forsake him. The emphasis here is one of confidence rather than a lack of confidence.

The LORD is all powerful. He never dies. There is no one greater than the God of the psalmist's salvation. The love that God has for His children is stronger than death. Death cannot separate it! We know that parental love is not as strong as death. No love on earth is. The psalmist said that the LORD would take him up, i.e. receive him. The basis for the psalmist's cry to the LORD for help as he served on earth was in the fact that he knew his relationship with the LORD is eternal. There is nothing in the universe that can bring a rift and take away his relationship with God. He knew this. This was the basis for his cry for help.

**VI. The Instruction for the Courageous – (vv 11-12)** – Even as the psalmist faced persecution, he knew that this was a time of learning from the LORD. Using synthetic parallelism he expressed his heartfelt desire of wanting to learn from the LORD. It may be evil men who were persecuting but in the eyes of the psalmist it was a lesson from the LORD. Using an imperative, the psalmist's desire was to be taught. It carries with it the idea of being instructed, like a student in a classroom asking the teacher to start teaching! The psalmist was ready to learn. He knew that it was not the way of self or of man that he wanted to learn but only the way of the LORD. He asked the LORD to teach him His way! The use of the vocative in "O LORD" deepened the sincerity of this request! The ways of man are real even in the life of a believer. If the believer is not careful, he can walk outside of God's will and not be aware of it. The adversity of persecution is the best way to teach a child of God the way of God; for it is in times like these that the child of God is tested and the very fabric of his convictions is revealed. This attitude of teachability in the psalmist is what every child of God needs to have – to submit to God's will in the face of persecution.

The psalmist wanted the LORD to lead him to the plain path. The word for "plain" means "level" or "straight." It is the path of righteousness or uprightness. The psalmist only wanted to do what is right in the eyes of the LORD, to lead him like a father holding his child's hand. The psalmist was basically saying to his LORD that he did not want to go his own way or to do anything without the LORD's guidance. He asked the LORD to take his hand and lead him to wherever the LORD wanted him to go, that he was willing as long as it was the LORD's way. He knew it would all work out for the good of his faith and trust in the LORD! The fact of the matter is that the enemies were present. They set traps and snares to stumble and destroy his witness for the LORD. He knew this. The psalmist must have felt like a man walking through a mine field.

**Verse 12** (synthetic parallelism) – The psalmist asked the LORD to not deliver him over to the will of his enemies. This was an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God in his life. It was not up to his enemies whether he would be taken or not; it was entirely up to the LORD! This time of great persecution came from the LORD even though the direct cause of his suffering came from evil men. This is a truth the believer's today often forget. The life of the child of God is never at the mercy of any man, not even Satan. It is always in the hand of his God. Crying to Him for help must not be the last resort but always the first. The psalmist's enemies included false witnesses. They wanted to assassinate his character. This hurts more than physical assault.

The words of man are sharp and designed to hurt and pierce the soul. The word "cruelty", or violent pain, was used. The psalmist cried and declared that the accusations against him were all false. He was hurting. He seemed not to mind that man believed the falsehood, but the LORD must not. Tell the LORD about these false witnesses. They are common enemies in

every believer's life, especially when we do the work of God and live holy lives. Just make sure that the witnesses are false! Do not let evil men have a hold on us; stay true and do not sin.

**VII. The Patience of the Courageous (vv 13-14)** – The psalmist said that the pain in his soul was very deep. It was the knowledge of seeing the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living that strengthened him. Verse 13 is another synthetic parallelism. The land of the living is this earth. The psalmist was not referring to life after death. He was referring to the presence of the LORD on earth and in his life and in the midst of persecution. It was not just the presence of the LORD that gave him strength but the goodness of the LORD as well. It must have been quite difficult to see the LORD's goodness on earth in the midst of false witnesses and evil men who constantly hurt God's children. Yet the psalmist said that he was able to see. There is the goodness of God in the evil of men when they do evil to God's children. No matter how dark the moment might be in the psalmist's life, he said to the LORD that he saw His goodness. This was also what Apostle Paul wrote in **Romans 8:28** (KJV), "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose." This is because of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God that Paul and the psalmist understood very well, experientially. All believers must understand this too, experientially.

The psalmist used the word "had believed" which points to faith. He saw by faith and continued to trust and to cry to the LORD. When the persecution ends, the psalmist would experience the goodness of God. One of such goodness is to have grown closer to the LORD, like Job who testified at the end of his life of great trial in **Job 42:5-6** (KJV), "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. **6** Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." Faith in the LORD means to trust in God's Truth, for it is only through the Word of God that the LORD is known and trusted.

**Verse 14** (synthetic parallelism) – The conclusion of the psalmist is to wait, i.e. wait patiently on the LORD. Do not be impatient. Let the LORD work His marvellous work in your lives as His children. Be of good courage and stand firm in the face of the evil men and false witnesses. Do not let them cause you to sin by murmuring and complaining. The LORD is in control. God's children must know this. God is never too late such that His child is crushed by the load. He is never too early that His child fails to see His hand in the deliverance. He will be just in time. The LORD knows all that He is doing in the lives of all His children.

Do not flinch in the face of the greatest persecution. He will give strength to your heart, dear believer! It is the greatest strength of all. When the heart is strong, the motive is right and the life is holy. Only God can give strength to the heart. Man can try to give strength in his own way but man is weak and cannot deal with all the issues of life. But the LORD's strength is able to. The psalmist's appeal to all of God's children is to keep on waiting

because it is a sign of their faith and trust in the LORD who always knows best and will always give to His children the best. Wait patiently on the LORD and always keep on the path of righteousness regardless of what evil men will do. Amen.