

Psalm 27:1–3 | “Whom Shall I Fear?”

*Preached on January 18, 2026 by Pastor Matt Brown*

You can turn in your Bibles to Psalm 27 this morning, and we will be just looking at verses 1–3.  
[pause]

Today, we are going to be thinking about fear and considering how we are to respond to it.  
[pauseeee]

Without a doubt, there are a lot of circumstances in life that could cause us to fear. [pause]

From a dark room to a dangerous person to a natural disaster, life is filled with the potential for fear.

And for some people, they might even say that not a day goes by that they *don't* feel some sort of fear rise up in them. [pauseee]

There are fears over upcoming, real events, and there is even fear over upcoming, fictional events that we think *could* happen, but usually don't. [pause]

There's fear of failure, fear of not having enough money, fear of losing your job, fear of dying, fear of others, and so many more things.

The list of phobias is a mile long. [pauseeee]

There's a saying that goes, “The only things certain in life are death and taxes.”

Well, they may have forgotten something because I'd say ‘fearful circumstances’ are pretty certain, too! [pauseeee]

How are we to respond to all of these fearful circumstances? [pause]

Should we all just hide under our covers all day long? [pause]

Should we run away? [pause]

Should we just accept fear in our hearts and endure it? [pause]

Should we just try to muster up some courage within ourselves, or is there another way forward?  
[pauseee]

The passage that we will look at today shows us that our response to fearful situations should be a firm trust in the Lord.

Let's READ it. [READ]

Life is full of changing situations, and for some of us our confidence in the Lord seems to change with those changing situations. [pause]

We may feel confident in God’s goodness in one moment, yet fearful and doubtful as we face another.

Or, we may trust God a little bit, but not fully. *[pauseeee]*

There’s an illustration of a man, who people called, “Uncle Oscar.” *[pause]*

“Uncle Oscar was apprehensive about his first airplane ride. *[pause]*

His friends, eager to hear how it went, asked if he enjoyed the flight. *[pause]*

‘Well,’ commented Uncle Oscar, ‘it wasn’t as bad as I thought it might be, but I’ll tell you this. I never did put all my weight down!’”<sup>1</sup> *[pauseeee]*

How many of us are like that when it comes to fear?

We may go through a fearful circumstance, but we never really trust God through it, putting our full weight on Him. *[pauseeee]*

*What David will show us in the psalm this morning is that...*

### **I. Our refuge from fear is the Lord. (1)**

Where do you find refuge from fear? *[pause]*

Some people feel refuge at home, or in the arms of a loved one, or somewhere else. *[pause]*

As Christians, our ultimate refuge is to be the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

These verses really show us someone with great assurance.

As one commentator put it: “[These verses] sparkle with mounting confidence, which men, enemies, an army, and even war cannot shake.”<sup>2</sup> *[pauseeee]*

Notice in verse 1 where David says, “The Lord is my light and my salvation,” and then he says, “The Lord is the stronghold of my life.” *[pauseeee]*

When faced with fear, David couldn’t help but point to the Lord as the solution. *[pause]*

The Lord wasn’t simply his past light and salvation or merely his future stronghold, but He truly and fully *is* those things at all times for David. *[pauseeee]*

What a comfort for fear-filled people like us—we can trust the Lord *at all times!* *[pause]*

<sup>1</sup> <https://ministry127.com/resources/illustrations/fear>.

<sup>2</sup> R. E. O. White, “Psalms,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 378.

As fears assail you as you lay in bed, or when fears arise within you as you are out and about doing something: God can be your stronghold.

The God who always and ever “is” is our light, salvation, and stronghold. *[pauseeee]*

If the Lord is our light, salvation, and stronghold then that means that other things cannot be substituted for Him. *[pause]*

I am not my own stronghold, for what a horrible stronghold I am for myself!

How could I be my own stronghold when I’m the one in fear? *[pause]*

Other people are not your salvation, for they can’t even save themselves. *[pause]*

Material possessions are not the solution, nor any other thing in the universe, but the Lord God Almighty. *[pauseeee]*

When faced with fear, do not trust your inner courage alone, nor some human tactics, but trust your God. *[pauseeee]*

The Lord is my light, salvation, and stronghold. *[pause]*

God doesn’t merely provide those things, but He in Himself is those things.

So God doesn’t provide some safe place over here and then leave us on our own, but HE is our safe place. *[pause]*

Is He your refuge? *[pauseeeee]*

The Lord is called “my light” and this means that God is the dispeller of darkness. *[pause]*

Think about light and darkness...

When it’s dark you can’t see, and so there’s a lot more dangers around, and you can be scared if you walk in the darkness with no light to see.

You might even plunge to your death, if you accidentally walk off of a cliff in the dark night, but in the light there’s safety and security, so light refers to guidance, life, and hope. *[pauseeee]*

A dark, shadowy figure is frightening in the dimness of a room, but once you shine a light on it, reality is revealed and the figure is seen to be what it really is. *[pause]*

So when God is our light, He shines forth the deficiencies of the terrors around us, and the terrors lose their teeth. *[pauseeeee]*

God is our light, but also our salvation, for He is the Deliverer and Rescuer. *[pauseeee]*

We all admire some hero in a book or movie, as we read or see them save others, but those portraits are miniscule, dim reflections of the ultimate Savior. *[pause]*

He is our salvation, and only as we cling to Him, do we find salvation. *[pauseeee]*

He is *my* light and *my* salvation, so He's not just the light and salvation for others, but for *me* and for *you*—is He yours? *[pauseeee]*

To be in the light and to be saved, you need to realize that you are in darkness and in need of saving. *[pause]*

The Bible tells us that we are all sinners against the good and holy God, who made us. *[pause]*

We are in darkness and need to be saved, for we can't save ourselves by any amount of good works or amazing deeds.

But in love and grace, God the Son, Jesus Christ, came down from Heaven and was born as a human, in order to die for our sins. *[pauseeee]*

Listen to how Jesus talks of Himself and how it relates to light, salvation, and stronghold. *[pause]*

Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."<sup>3</sup> *[pause]*

We are told that He is "the Savior of the world."<sup>4</sup>

And in Him we find a stronghold that never fails, for He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me..."

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."<sup>5</sup> *[pauseeee]*

You want light, salvation, and a stronghold?...

Look no further than Jesus Christ, who is all of those things in one! *[pauseeee]*

The Lord is truly our stronghold.

He is our strong, stable defense in a life filled with fearful-looking situations. *[pauseeee]*

David was a physically strong and capable warrior, yet he found his stronghold in his Lord.

What about you? *[pause]*

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<sup>3</sup> John 8:12.

<sup>4</sup> John 4:42.

<sup>5</sup> John 10:27–28.

Every other “stronghold” of life will fail you eventually. *[pauseeee]*

Money can fail you, for it can be gone in an instant. *[pause]*

Possessions get old, get lost, or get stolen.

And other people aren’t always reliable, but God is the one stronghold that always remains. *[pauseeeee]*

David says that the Lord is the stronghold of *his life*. *[pause]*

He’s not just the stronghold of this moment, but my life.

He’s not just the stronghold of other people’s lives, but mine.

He’s not just the stronghold of my body, my job, my reputation, or my house, but of my very *life*. *[pauseeee]*

What’s more important than your life? You can trust Him with it.

Knowing this—why should we fear? That’s David’s point. *[pauseeeee]*

Have you ever had to remind yourself of the truth in order to calm your fears? *[pause]*

Let’s say that you were told by the owner himself that you were allowed to go backstage at a theater.

So you start to go backstage, but other people look at you weird, as if you shouldn’t be there. *[pause]*

Fear could arise within you, yet what do you do?...

You remind yourself, “No, I’m allowed to be here because the owner said that I could, so why am I worrying?” *[pauseeee]*

That’s what we need to do with our fears, we need to talk them down with reminders of the truth. *[pause]*

When you get nervous that your needs won’t be provided for, remind yourself of who owns everything, and has promised to provide for your needs. *[pause]*

When you start to get afraid about what’s going to happen in the future, remember that the Lord holds the future in His hands. *[pauseeee]*

Since the Lord is my light, my salvation, and my stronghold, then why fear? *[pauseeeee]*

Some of you are firefighters—that can be a scary job.

You go into dangerous places regularly, but the Lord can be your stronghold even there. *[pause]*

Or maybe you are fearful of death because the death of other firemen confronts you with the reality of your own future death. *[pauseeee]*

Christ can be your light and salvation, so that even though you may die, yet you shall live eternally with the Lord.<sup>6</sup> *[pause]*

Place your big Lord up against your fears, and watch them shrink.

The light always beats the darkness, the Almighty Savior always rescues those He intends, and the strongest stronghold there is always protects against the rushing waters. *[pauseeeee]*

*As David moves on in this psalm, he shows us that...*

## **II. Even though fearful things arise, we can trust the Lord. (2–3)**

They say that “President and Mrs. Benjamin Harrison were so intimidated by the newfangled electricity installed in the White House they didn’t dare touch the switches. *[pause]*

*If there were no servants around to turn off the lights when the Harrisons went to bed, they slept with them on.”<sup>7</sup> [pauseeee]*

When we are fearful, we sometimes become frozen in terror, afraid to do anything, but David shows us that the right response to fearful things is to act in faith. *[pauseeee]*

Have you ever thought about potential things that *could* happen in the future?

Usually it leads to anxiety or fear. *[pause]*

Some of us do this for every little thing—we think about all that could go wrong, even if it is extremely unlikely.

And we excuse it by saying, “It still *could* happen, you know.” *[pauseeee]*

*We sometimes feel overwhelmed, as we think about all that could go wrong.*

But for David, when he thought of the future, he was not filled with fear, but filled with faith. *[pauseeee]*

In verses 2–3, David gives some examples of possible, fear-inducing situations in the future, but what he does is he confidently resolves to not fear, though they come. *[pause]*

He gives the situation of evildoers attacking him, and he describes them like wild animals, intent on feeding on his flesh.

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<sup>6</sup> A reference to John 11:25.

<sup>7</sup> Original source: Jane Goodsell, *Not a Good Word About Anybody*, Ballantine. Found at: <https://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/f/fear.htm>.

And that's what our enemies may appear like, but though that happens, David says that it is *they* who will stumble and fall, not him. *[pause]*

His enemies may come in confidence, but they neglect to see the great obstacle of God in their way.

And oh, what a big obstacle He is, which they miss in their arrogance! *[pause]*

David knows the outcome is sure because God is on His side—do you know the ultimate outcome is sure with God? *[pauseeee]*

He says in verse 3 that even if an army or war came, yet he would be confident in faith. *[pauseee]*

An army encamping against you or war arising would easily cause great fear and trembling.

The anticipation is sometimes more fearful than the actual fighting and makes people shudder.

But for David, he won't fear, but be confident in the Lord. *[pauseee]*

Though *our* enemies gather around us, or sin creeps at our door, or troubles loom around the corner, we don't have to panic, but we can actually be confident. *[pause]*

Our hearts don't need to melt, but they can be solidified with faith.

So we don't just put on a brave face, but our very hearts can be free from fear. *[pauseeee]*

This means that you can look ahead to the possibilities of the future, and trust the Lord.

You can say, "Though my bank account may go dry, yet I will trust the Lord."

You can say, "Though everything is taken away from me, still I will trust Him."

You can say, "Though I lay on my deathbed, yet I will still be secure in the Lord's hand, for my earthly life is not all there is, for I trust in Jesus Christ, who is my life." *[pauseeee]*

David was resolved with confident faith.

He put his hope in God for the future certainties *and* uncertainties of life. *[pause]*

He had faith amidst the "what if's" of life. *[pauseeee]*

While nowadays we don't typically have enemies coming at us like David, we do face some enemies that are fierce. *[pauseee]*

The devil is ferocious, and he shoots flaming, spiritual arrows at us.<sup>8</sup>

Other people can persecute us, sin can entangle us, and death looms over us.

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<sup>8</sup> A reference to Ephesians 6:16.

But through Christ, He gives us the victory amidst these things! *[pauseeee]*

Romans 8 says, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” and then it goes on to say that, “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” *[pause]*

Since this is true, Paul can confidently say...

“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.”<sup>9</sup> *[pauseeeee]*

He is our light, our salvation, and our stronghold.

No matter what we face, if we trust in Jesus Christ, then we are safe within His loving arms. *[pause]*

Absolutely *nothing* can separate us from our stronghold—no enemy, no future event, not even our own physical death. *[pauseeeee]*

*Looking at these couple verses this morning, we see that we should...*

**Draw near to the Lord, who is our refuge from fear!**

If we went on to verses 4–6, we would see that what David does is he determines to draw near to God.

And that’s what I would encourage you to do, knowing that the Lord is our refuge from fear. *[pauseeee]*

In fearful circumstances, it’s not time to run away in terror, nor to trust yourself, or some other thing in this world, but it’s time to draw near to God in faith.

His presence is what we need above all. *[pause]*

So go the Lord today, tomorrow, and every day that follows, for He is our stronghold, who never fails. *[pauseeeee]*

I don’t know exactly what fearful situations that you are facing, but this I know: trust in God is the answer.

Every circumstance may be different, but the answer is the same. *[pauseeee]*

Does your fear revolve around money? *[pause]*

What about people? *[pause]*

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<sup>9</sup> A reference to Romans 8:31–39.

Is it death? *[pause]*

Is it from the general uncertainty of life or the chaos of our country?

The Lord is (and can be) your light, salvation, and stronghold, so why fear? *[pauseeeee]*

“A mother and her four-year-old daughter were preparing to retire for the night. *[pause]*

The child was afraid of the dark, and...when the light was out, the child caught a glimpse of the moon outside the window. *[pause]*

‘Mother,’ she asked, ‘is the moon God’s light?’ *[pause]*

‘Yes,’ said the mother. *[pause]*

The next question was, ‘Will God put out His light and go to sleep?’ *[pause]*

The mother replied, ‘No, my child, God never goes to sleep.’”<sup>10</sup> *[pauseeeee]*

Aren’t you thankful for a God that does not sleep nor slumber, but is always *there*? *[pause]*

He can continually be our refuge no matter what time it is, no matter what circumstance, no matter what uncertainty. *[pauseeeee]*

With confidence in our God, we can face any situation that comes our way. *[pause]*

Whether you’re facing fires, financial trouble, family tension, or something else, yet you can be confident. *[pause]*

This doesn’t mean that our physical lives will always be protected, but it means that though we face even our own death, nothing will separate us from the love of Christ. *[pauseeee]*

**With faith in Christ alone, we can stand forgiven in God’s sight.**

We can have Him with us always, comforting us and giving us what we need moment by moment, and He will take us to be with Him someday. *[pauseeeee]*

If you are sitting here and you are thinking, “I want that hope. I want that assurance that I can be forgiven.”

Or, “I want that assurance of salvation and eternal life.”

Then the Bible shows us that you must admit that you are a sinner, who has sinned against God, and that there’s no way to save yourself. *[pause]*

Confess your sin to God, and trust in Jesus Christ to be saved, knowing that he died for you so that you could be forgiven and be given eternal life. *[pause]*

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<sup>10</sup> <https://ministry127.com/resources/illustrations/fear>.

He is the way to be saved!

So look to Christ as your light, your salvation, and your stronghold—he doesn't turn away anyone who draws near to Him. *[pauseee]*

Life is filled with fearful circumstances and people, there's no doubt about it, but what is your response to those times? *[pause]*

Will your eyes be focused on the fearful situation, or will you turn your eyes to the Lord, and say, "Whom shall I fear?"