

## **Psalm 27**

Of David.

*<sup>1</sup> 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?<sup>2</sup> When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.<sup>3</sup> Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup> For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.<sup>6</sup> Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.<sup>7</sup> Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.<sup>8</sup> My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek.<sup>9</sup> Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Saviour.<sup>10</sup> Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.<sup>12</sup> Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.<sup>13</sup> I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.<sup>14</sup> Wait for the LORD be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.*

Let’s pray:

In the passage we have read from Psalm 27 we can find encouragement and take heart that we can put our trust in the Lord and not to be terrified by all the media reports that we cannot seem to get away from. Whenever we turn on the news or pick up a newspaper we cannot ignore or escape the worldwide effect that the Corona virus (Covid 19) is having. Yes, it is a sad fact that there have been many deaths because of it, but there is a real danger that we can let the continual news reports that come at us from all sorts of directions paralyse us, causing us to feel powerless and maybe even, utter despair.

This situation is having a huge disruptive effect on the lives of people right across the world. There has been disruption of flights and travel between countries, holidays have been cancelled or postponed. Most countries have adopted lockdowns, restricting people’s freedom in an attempt to prevent or delay the spread of this virus.

The medical and scientific specialists in various countries seem to have different ideas on how best to deal with this virus. This all has the effect of ramping up the fear factor as people seem to wonder if they can truly put their trust in these specialists or their politician’s.

We are all too aware that when fear takes hold of people, common sense goes out the window, and some act irrationally, like headless chickens as it were. They become self-centred, thinking only about their own situation and don't seem to realise that by hoarding things (that are required to slow down or halt the virus), they fail to understand that others also need those supplies, if the spread of the virus is to be disrupted.

Our government has advised that we should avoid large social gatherings, avoid theatres, pubs, restaurants and events such as the London marathon. The Grand National along with a wide range of other sporting events has been cancelled or postponed. This weekend there were special events planned to commemorate VE DAY 75, which had to be cancelled or watered down.

It's difficult to know how long this situation will continue.

Our government can't tell us when this pandemic will end, there is only one who knows when this virus will be conquered, "God".

Every night news briefings update us on the pandemic. I do not know about you, but I find it disturbing that during these briefings of 7 weeks now, there has been no reference to seeking God's intervention to bring this pandemic to an end.

How things have changed in this land of ours, which was once a considered a Christian country.

Although it may surprise you, I was not around at the time, but I am aware that during the Second World War the King and parliament called for 7 days of prayer. There were at least 3 separate days of prayer during the first year of the war. I find it incredibly sad that as a country we have seemed to have lost our way and the Lord seems to be airbrushed out, as it were.

The question I would ask is this, should we as Christians be frightened by this pandemic? No! Why? Because we know that the Lord is in control and nothing happens in this world without His permission and purpose. We may not know what His purpose is regarding this pandemic, but we can trust in His promise. That we can read in:

**Jeremiah 29:11** *For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

We need to remember that as Christians, although we are in the world, we are not of it.

**2 Corinthians 10:3** *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.*

It seems clear to me, if we have a reason to wage war against any problem (and the current pandemic is certainly a worthy opponent). If we hope to beat it, we will need to seek the Lords help and get down on our knees and seek God's grace. Then maybe we will be able to quote the following:

**Isaiah 25:9** *In that day they will say, 'Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.'*

We should be concerned by Covid 19, Yes, but we don't need to be fearful. When you have faith, you can put your trust in the Lord.

I began with a reading from the Old Testament, so I will finish with a reading from the New Testament.

**Romans 5: 1-5**

Peace and Hope

*1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

Amen