**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Fear to Salvation’s Peace

A Psalm of David – 27:1

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

August 6th In the Year of Our Lord 2023

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted.)

 Today, I want to focus on God’s spiritual power operating in us and its superiority over fear. Fear leads to stress and is a significant life-changing force. God created the world with our ability to choose to have fear rule our lives or His peace. And, it is my observation that most people live their lives in fear of something. The American Psychological Association publishes a yearly “stress” report. (Below – part of the 2022 report)

 

**Percentage of U.S. adults reporting feelings of uncertainty and concern for the future:**

 70% reported they do not think people in the government care about them

 64% said they feel their rights are under attack

 45% said they do not feel protected by the laws in the United States

 38% said the state of the nation has made them consider moving to a different country

 40% said their states political environment has made them consider moving to a different state

<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2022/infographics/infographic-society-distress>

**American Psychological Association**

**Stress in America 2022**

**Concerned for the future, beset by inflation**

https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2022/concerned-future-inflation

The U.S. population has experienced an intense range of stressors over the past few years, as the Covid-19 pandemic, racial injustice, and political divisiveness have dominated news cycles and social media. A new survey, conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of APA, tells a story of uncertainty and dissolution.

Stress in America 2022: Concerned for the Future, Beset by Inflation, shows a battered American psyche, facing a barrage of external stressors that are mostly out of personal control. The survey found a majority of adults are disheartened by government and political divisiveness, daunted by historic inflation levels, and dismayed by widespread violence.

The report summarizes findings on current reported stress levels, sources, and consequences. Our psychologists also offer advice and strategies to help the nation navigate the fear of the unknown and the pervasive threats to the well-being of all Americans. APA is committed to empowering people to find ways to take back control and to find peace and calm in the chaos.

**Oxford Dictionary:**

 ***Fear – (noun)*** *an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat. "he is prey to irrational fears"*

 ***Fear* – (verb)** be afraid of (someone or something) as likely to be dangerous, painful, or threatening. "farmers fear that they will lose business"

 What are your most dreaded fears? Our human side has the natural fear of physical harm to ourselves or others and challenges in relationships. . . particularly with family and close friends. For students, the fear of receiving a failing grade or not getting the right teacher or class. For employees. . . perhaps the dreaded boss. If we listen to the weatherman or weatherwoman… we should be afraid of nature at every turn. They assign names to hurricanes and many other natural occurrences like they were people with an evil personality seeking to do bad things to you.

 When we read the Bible, we see that most people had a fear in them that was overwhelming and caused them to sin. King Herod feared the coming Messiah would usurp his authority and ordered the infant babies killed (Matthew 2:3). The Roman governor, Pilate, feared the Jewish uprising if he were to let Jesus go.

When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." (Matthew 27:24)

 In contrast to Herod and Pilate, Jesus taught. . .

"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

 The Old Testament chronicles the life of David, who had much to fear in his life. From David’s youth as a shepherd, he was fearful for the welfare of the sheep. David had to overcome his fears. We see this in the account David gives King Saul before he fights Goliath.

**1 Samuel 17:34-37**

 **34** But David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock,

 **35** I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him.

 **36** "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God."

 **37** And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you."

 By the time David is confronted and pursued by King Saul, he already had numerous challenges in his life where he had to rely upon God for his inner strength and resolve.

 Let us now read Psalm 27:1 and the following verses.

‎

**Leningrad Codex ( Masoretic Text 11c. AD**

 **Psalm 27:1** לְדָוִ֙ד׀ יְהוָ֤ה׀ אוֹרִ֣י וְ֭יִשְׁעִי מִמִּ֣י אִירָ֑א יְהוָ֥ה מָֽעוֹז־חַ֜יַּ֗י מִמִּ֥י אֶפְחָֽד׃

***Psalms 27:1 Dead Sea Scroll 4Q98a (1st century BC) Discovered 1952***

***Hebrew to English translation***

***Psalms*By David.**

***1*Yahweh is my light *and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?***

***Yahweh is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?***

**Coverdale 1535 AD** The LORDE is my light and my health: whom then shulde I feare? the LORDE is the strength of my life, for whom the shulde I be afrayed?

**Geneva Bible 1560 AD** Psalm 27:1 A Psalme of David. The Lord is my light and my saluation, whom shall I feare? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whome shall I be afraide?

**KJV 1611 AD** Psalm 27:1 <A Psalm of David.> The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

**ASV 1901 AD** Psalm 27:1 A Psalm of David. Jehovah is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

**NAS (1977 AD - Updated 1995 AD)** Psalm 27:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?

**NKJV 1982** AD Psalm 27:1 <A Psalm of David.> The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

**ESV (2001 AD – Updated 2017)** Psalm 27:1 Of David. 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?

**NET (2002 AD - Updated 2019)** Psalm 27:1 By David. The LORD delivers and vindicates me! I fear no one! The LORD protects my life! I am afraid of no one!

**Remainder of Psalm 27**

 **2** When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, My adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell.

 **3** Though a host encamp against me, My heart will not fear; Though war arise against me, In spite of this I shall be confident.

 **4** One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

 **5** For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock.

 **6** And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

 **7** Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me.

 **8** When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O LORD, I shall seek."

 **9** Do not hide Your face from me, Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation!

 **10** For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the LORD will take me up.

 **11** Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a level path Because of my foes.

 **12** Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence.

 **13** I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.

 **14** Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.

What important observations can we make from Psalm 27? Most people just read a Psalm in the Bible and have no context to the chapter or verse. I mean. . . to start with **who** wrote the Psalms. . . **where** were they at. . . and **when** were they written . . . and for **what** purpose (**why**)?

 The short answer is. . .Psalm 27 was written by David, living in Israel in the 10th c. BC who was on the run for his life from his enemies. In Psalm 27, David is most likely being pursued by King Saul. But David proclaims his fearless refuge in God, as a witness to all people regardless of circumstances, that God sustains us. Now this “sustaining” has an eternal outlook through physical death into an eternal life with God. As for our temporal life, even though others may threaten our physical bodies. . . God’s spiritual presence sustains us through all. Remember that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Like David, the Apostle Paul was persecuted and eventually martyred (68 AD in Rome) for being a witness for Jesus, the Messiah. The well-educated pharisee, Paul, responded to God’s call on the road to Damascus and surrendered to be His servant, a chosen instrument of God’s. God spoke through Paul to the Believers in Rome not to be afraid of the hard challenges in their temporal lives. In writing to the Roman Believers, Paul turns to God’s Word in order to strengthen and encourage them. . . Paul quotes another Psalm, in Romans 8:36; a Psalm not written by David (Psalm 44:22) but the sons of Korah.

**Romans 8:35-39**

**35** Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

 **36** Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

 **37** But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

 **38** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

 **39** nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**A Closer Look at David - the Writer of Psalm 27**

David wrote down seventy-three (73) Psalms with number twenty-seven (27) being one. Many Biblical historians believe that David wrote Psalm 27 when he was fleeing from King Saul.

 **And why was David being pursued by King Saul? Who was King Saul?**

David was the second King of the United Monarch period (1050 BC – 930 BC). This was a time after the Exodus 15th c. and at the end of the period of Judges, with Samuel being the last Judge. There were three successive kings during this period: Saul, David, and Solomon. All three had a reign of about forty years.

This period started with the Hebrew people clamoring to be ruled by a king like their neighboring people groups. 1 Samuel 8 details these events. Samuel (the last Judge) was an old man and his sons, Joel, and Abijah ruled poorly, so the people complained to Samuel for a king. They had accepted Samuel as a prophet of God, who had administered (Judged) God’s will over the people well. However, Samuel’s sons. . . perverted justice.

 Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." (1 Samuel 8:5)

Samuel complained to God, but God allowed the people to have a king with a warning that a king’s rule over them would cost them dearly.

"Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

 The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. (1 Samuel 8:7) . . . "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them." (1 Samuel 8:9)

**God spoke through Samuel. . .**

This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. (1 Samuel 8:11)

Samuel’s search for a king ended with Saul being anointed. However, Saul’s rule was rebellious towards God and he and his sons were eventually killed in battle (1 Samuel 15).

. . .for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel. (1 Samuel 15:35)

But before Saul and his sons were killed in battle, David had been anointed to be the new king and Saul knew that David was to replace him.

I (God) will send you (Samuel) to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons." (1 Samuel 16:1)

Therefore, Saul pursued David to kill him. David wrote Psalm 27 to witness God working through and strengthening him.

A few hundred years after Samuel’s work, God’s prophet, Isaiah, reiterates the fulfillment of God’s intent that the Messiah will come from a descendant of David.

**Isaiah 11:10** Then in that day **The nations** [gentiles] will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

 Isaiah lives in the second half of the 8th c. (762 – 680 BC). In advance of Isaiah’s words, God had spoken through Samuel (1 Samuel 16) about two-hundred and seventy years before Isaiah’s prophecies. Isaiah then confirms the historical lineage of Jesus to be through Jesse. Then, seven hundred plus years after Isaiah confirms the Messiahs’s heritage from Jesse, the Apostle Paul connects the dots for the Believers in Rome.

**Romans 15:12** Again Isaiah says, "THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL **THE GENTILES** HOPE."

David is one of the most noted and well-known biblical figures. A person who has read the Bible being Jew or Christian cannot escape the importance of David, the son of Jesse. . . who was chosen by God, acting through His prophet Samuel to succeed King Saul. Saul had also been chosen by God through His prophet Samuel.

Through all of humanities fallen calamities, God marches on with His plan. Most of us have experienced enough of life to know that regardless of some popular secular charismatic political leader or the occurrence of a natural event like an earthquake, hurricane, tornado, health failures and the like. . . God’s Word, His eternal love and Truth resides in our hearts and minds to sustain us. We, Believers, spiritually reside in a house founded upon the Rock of our Salvation.

**Psalm 62:1-7** **1** For the choir director; according to Jeduthun.

A Psalm of David. My soul waits in silence for God only; From Him is my salvation.

**2** **He only is my rock and my salvation**, My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.

**3** How long will you assail a man, That you may murder him, all of you, Like a leaning wall, like a tottering fence?

**4** They have counseled only to thrust him down from his high position; They delight in falsehood; They bless with their mouth, But inwardly they curse. Selah.

**5** My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him.

**6** **He only is my rock and my salvation**, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.

**7** **On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.**

**Amen**