



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?

Psalm 27:1

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 22, 2021

*Call to Worship

God is our light and our salvation; whom shall we fear?

***God is our shelter and refuge on the days of trouble,
and our hope and joy on the days of celebration!***

Day after day, we seek God's face and the assurance of God's holy love:

O God, do not turn from us or hide your face from us!

Be our guide and our light instead!

One thing we ask of God:

***That we may live in God's dwelling place all the days of our life,
and never cease to behold the beauty of God's home.***

*Beloved of God, enter this worship in thanksgiving,
for God is among and within us!*

Thanks be to God!

*Hymn of Praise

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"

UMH 133

*Opening Prayer

*Gracious Light-Bearer, into the shadows of our isolation, you speak words of life and community. Challenger of our lives, you call us from places we call home to lead us more deeply into the world you love. With your gentle, healing touch you redeem the broken places of our lives and you heal the wounded places of the earth. Inspire our worship here this day, so that we may receive liberation in your word, and be filled to overflowing to share your redeeming love throughout the earth. We pray in Jesus' name, **Amen.***

Share How You Can Present Your Offering to God

Make your offering personal...through a donation or an act of service...bring to God an offering of praise and gratitude!

Sing the Doxology Together

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer for Your Light and Salvation to Shine

Heavenly Father, sometimes it seems like darkness enshrouds us. Many people in this world of ours feel their world is one of darkness and gloom. Pressures crowd in upon us and get us down. Fears assail us fueled by the news feeds on our tablets and screens.

Gracious and loving God, we rejoice that you are with us in our troubles, you know us and you love us – always. Even though we have made a mess of things personally and collectively you remain faithful. We rejoice that your Son came not to a perfect world, but to a broken world, our world. To bring light to the darkness, our darkness.

We pray for our dark and dreary world, a world in need – in need not just of a technical fix, but in need of love and grace, forgiveness and new life, hope, peace and fellowship, in need of renewal, in need of YOU.

We pray that you would come alongside us and all those for whom we pray, that you would show us Jesus, the light of the world, the one who came and who comes to cleanse us of sin, to give us life and peace that passes all understanding – not a temporary respite from trouble but the strength to overcome trouble as it comes.

We have been set free. Enable us to use our freedom to share in bringing in the kingdom. In the light of this we have something to celebrate, something to shout about – for even in our trouble and pain, even in our loss, we know that Jesus is with us.

Hear us as in a moment of silence we pray for those in darkness (of whatever kind) – let us pray that they may see and know the light of Christ: Silence

*The Lord is my light and my salvation. Hear our prayers, Lord, spoken and unspoken and answer them for Jesus' sake. **Amen***

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

God's Word

Psalm 27:1-3

The Word of God for the people of God...Thanks be to God!

Message

"With God on My Side, I Can Be Fearless"

Pastor Clark

*Hymn of Faith

"How Firm a Foundation"

UMH 529

Blessing

God is our light, our hope, our all in all: Blessed be God, now and forever! Christ is our home, our life, our joy: Blessed be God, now and forever! Our worship concludes; our service continues. Blessed be God, now and forever!



Psalm 27 (NLT) A Psalm of David.

¹ *The LORD is my light and my salvation—
so why should I be afraid?*

*The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger,
so why should I tremble?*

² *When evil people come to devour me,
when my enemies and foes attack me,
they will stumble and fall.*

³ *Though a mighty army surrounds me,
my heart will not be afraid.
Even if I am attacked,
I will remain confident.*

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

*1. What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
leaning on the everlasting arms.*

Refrain:

*Leaning, leaning,
safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning,
leaning on the everlasting arms.*

*2. O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day,
leaning on the everlasting arms.
(Refrain)*

*3. What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
leaning on the everlasting arms.
(Refrain)*

How Firm a Foundation

- 1. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent word!
What more can he say than to you he hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*
- 2. "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.*
- 3. "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*
- 4. "When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.*
- 5. "The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."*

With God on My Side, I Can Be Fearless

“The Lord is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?” Psalm 27:1 (NLT)

I am indebted to Paul David Tripp for inspiration for this message in ***“A Shelter in the Time of Storm”***

Introduction

This world is not functioning the way it was designed to function. Paul reminds us in Romans 8, for instance, that we are living in a world that is groaning, waiting for redemption.

- We live in a world where ***disease*** and ***death*** exist as we have witnessed with the COVID-19 Pandemic over the last year and a half claiming over 4.4 million lives
- We live in a world where ***deceit*** and ***corruption*** run rampant
- We live in a world of ***rebellion*** and ***lust*** and ***greed*** are so commonplace that they seem normal
- We live in a world of ***sin*** and ***suffering*** and ***loss***
- We live in a world of ***natural disasters and calamities***...tropical storms, hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, wildfires, floods, etc.
- We live in a world where ***tragedies*** strike and the ***unimaginable*** happen all too frequently
- We live in a world of ***violence*** and ***war*** that poison our world with unspeakable brutality

This is not what God intended. Unfortunately, we live in a world where all these things could touch all our lives! No person or relationship is free of the profound disappointment that comes from living in this world that is not functioning the way it was designed to function.

What’s the impact of living in the midst of such disarray, such chaos, such pain?

- We feel fear which is why fear is now running rampant in our society
- We experience deep sense of vulnerability
- We seek to escape from the danger
- We seek to anesthetize ourselves from the pain
- We hide away in the safest places we know

Can we ever find a measure of security in the midst of this uncertain and out-of-control world? Can we ever experience peace of mind and heart in such a broken world? What happens when the brokenness of this world breaks us? Can we ever come to the point where we would have the audacity to say that we could stand fearless in the face of all this calamity? Those are profoundly relevant questions as we live in 2021.

One thing is for certain: there is something we all do to try to manage our risks in the face of such insecurity:

We respond to the upheavals and the uncertainties of life by erecting ***“security systems”*** in our lives...

I know a pastor who moved into a house with an older security system. He wanted to protect his family and possessions, so he had the security company to revitalize and update that system. But even after the update, it never quite worked the way it was supposed to work. The crucial motion-detector that was installed in the living room malfunctioned quickly. It was hyper-sensitive. Even though it was designed to provide protection for that zone of the house, it picked up even the slightest of movements. In the middle of one night, the alarms went off with such glaring ferocity that he thought there might be an alien invasion. It was so loud it could raise the dead in the cemetery a mile down the road! Needless to say that system is still there, but that family never uses it anymore. He calls it his expense ***insecurity system***.

But, there are all kinds of other ***“security systems”*** that we erect in our lives to provide us with a measure of security. Where we typically look for security:

- Investments
- Health Care Systems
- Relationships
- The Body of Christ
- Yourself

All the places we look for security really offer us little of what we are seeking. That’s why this Psalm is so practically important. Psalm 27 introduces us to the ***world’s best security system*** (again Paul David Tripp’s idea). ***It isn’t to be found horizontally.*** Deep and lasting security, resilient hope, and the genuine rest of heart and mind can only be found ***vertically.***

You will only know the rest for which you seek when you begin to embrace the astounding reality of who you are as a child of God. The move from fearful to fearless revolves around who God is in your life! Who is this Lord? Yahweh is His name.

Light. David the Psalmist declares that the Lord is my Light. Yahweh is the illuminating Light that vanquishes the darkness threatening David. Jesus affirmed more of this in John 8:12:

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

Salvation. That the Lord is my salvation. Rescued by God. Delivered from the hands of his enemies.

Fortress. The Lord is my fortress. Yahweh is the life-saving stronghold that delivers David from the attacks of his enemies.

“He rules every microbe of physical and spiritual creation. There is no rule of law that stands above Him. There is no one to whom He must answer. He is perfect in every way, existing entirely without flaw of will or character. He is the beginning and epicenter of everything that is good, loving, wise, and true. He never forgets, and He never fails to deliver on any of His promises.”

The protective presence and care of Yahweh encourages the David to stand confidently firm in the face of the enemy attack. Confidence is a possibility! David declares:

I am not afraid...I am fearless. And we can make that same declaration, but it is not because of what you may think:

- Not because we are strong or wise
- Not because we have power or position
- Not because we have health and wealth
- Not because we have circumstances that are easy

We are not afraid...we are fearless despite the fact that we are weak, imperfect, and short-sided. It is not contingent upon each of us resolving our weaknesses, our imperfections, and our blindness.

*“I am not afraid...I am fearless for one reason alone...one glorious reason: **I have been lit by the Lord of Light.** In the darkness of this fallen world, I no longer walk in the night, but have been given the Light of Life. I am not afraid because Light lives in me. This one amazing reality gives me rest: I have been rescued from darkness and transported into the light and I am not afraid.”* Paul David Tripp

We are not afraid...we are fearless NOT because we have found our own way to salvation. Our salvation is not a self-help project that we must perfect. Our salvation is not a series of tests we must pass or contests we must win. Our salvation rests not in our intelligence, effort, wealth, status, power, or position. Our salvation only resides in the heart of a God of mercy and grace. Our salvation resides in the pure heart of God’s unconditional and sacrificial love for us and our world.

We are not afraid...we are fearless NOT because we have managed to find the perfect fortress against all the evil and all the darkness of our broken world. Our fortress isn’t about us at all. It is about the only true fortress ever in existence: the LORD, our Fortress.

This Light, this Salvation, this Fortress is your Father. He will never leave your side. He will never fail to provide. He will make good on everything He has promised. He has the power to do so. He is LORD.

So even when the brokenness of this world breaks us, we can still be fearless. We can rest secure in the fact that the **Light** pierces the darkness, **Salvation** is outside our efforts, and a **Fortress** exists in God’s protective Presence.

So let me be blunt: when the worst of the worst happens to you or me, we can still rest secure in God’s hands! Rest translates trust. Trust translates into resilience and hope. Back to Romans 8:

Nothing Can Separate Us from God’s Love

³¹ What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? ³² Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else? ³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for

us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Safe By Paul David Tripp

I am safe,

not because I have no
trouble,

or because I never experience danger.

I am safe,

not because people affirm
me,

or my plans always
work out.

I am safe,

not because I am immune from disease,
or free of the potential for poverty.

I am safe,

not because I am protected from disappointment,
or separated from this
fallen world.

I am safe,

not because I am
wise

or strong.

I am safe,

not because I deserve
comfort or have earned my
ease.

I am safe,
not because of
money,
or power,
or position,
or intellect,
or who I know,
or where I live.

I am safe because of the glorious
mystery of
grace.

I am safe because of the presence of
boundless love.

I am safe because of
divine mercy,
divine wisdom,
divine power,
and divine grace.

**I am safe,
not because I never face
danger,
but because you are
with me in it.**

**You have not given me
a ticket out of danger.**

**You have not promised me
a life of ease.**

**You have chosen to place me in
a fallen world.**

**I am safe
because you have given me
the one thing
that is the
only thing
that will ever keep me safe.**

**You have given me
you.**

Praying for One Another

- *Jaylyn Rhinehart's mother Jill Durham passed away after a long cancer battle*
- *Gene Fields, Matt's father, hernia surgery options*
- *Heather Martin, back in MCE with severe infection*
- *Elizabeth Jones, making remarkable recovery at MCE*
- *Family of Tom Ulrey, colleague of James Martin, who passed away*
- *Jan Smith from Faith Church continuing treatments*
- *Christina Cuddihy, as she continues her treatments*
- *Sarah Cory and Guy Cory as they contend with all they are facing*
- *Brady Martin, 10-year-old struggling with leukemia*
- *Gary Stammler, amazing recovery from pancreatic cancer treatments*
- *Eileen Moffo, mother of Carla Jay, as they found a mass on her liver*
- *Community Focus: Schools and Staff as new school year looms with risks*
- *National Focus: Resurgence of COVID-19 via Delta Variant*
- *World Focus: Earthquake in Haiti; open pathways for humanitarian aid*

Tools for Schools: We are ending our collection for Tools for Schools. Bring your donations soon. The Tools for Schools (TFS) program provides students with school supplies and backpacks throughout the school year.

Grandparent's Day

Grandparent's Day is Sunday, September 12th. We are asking folks to submit pictures of your family (it would be great if you're in the picture too!) and grandchildren. We will prepare a slide presentation for that Sunday. If at all possible, please share the pictures **digitally**.

Attention Choir members and Future Choir Members: The Hope/Faith Choir will begin practicing on Wednesday September 15, 2021 at 7:00 PM at the Hope Church. We will sing for the Sunday worship service on September 19, 2021. We are looking forward to a great "choir" year of sharing our voices during our worship services. Any questions, please contact Dwight or Theresa Snowden.

Outdoor Worship and Picnic: on Sunday September 19 we will have a special outdoor worship experience and a church-wide picnic! Put this on your calendar now as we will have all kinds of special features that morning!

Pray for Haiti and Share Your Compassion: Our hearts are once again touched with compassion for this beleaguered nation hit with another massive earthquake taking the lives of over 1400 and injuring thousands more. Scores left homeless. Desire to make a donation? Make to either Faith or Hope UMC and memo Haiti Offering and we will make sure it goes through UMCOR so you can be certain 100% of your donations go to meet the need at hand.

Hopeful Hearts: Hope's baby clothing ministry has shifted to winter clothes but finds itself extremely low on clothing due to the pandemic dynamics. We urgently need donations—even new clothes—for this vital ministry. Boys and girls clothing birth to five years old. You can bring it to church on a Sunday or drop off at Hope.

New Adult Sunday School Class starting September 12 led by Matt Fields and Tom Helber each Sunday from 9:00-9:45 AM. Watch for more details.

