

Waiting with Trust

Psalm 27

Mark Vroegop

“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? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, LORD, do I seek.” Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in. Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!” (Ps. 27, ESV)

One of my favorite places to camp is Brown County State Park. If you are a camper, you might be familiar with the campground, Taylor Ridge. It is a favorite of ours because the entire campground sits on the top of a ridge—thus the name! Nearly every backs up to a deep valley full of beautiful trees. It’s a place that we love to visit.

When we camp at Brown County, one of the things I love to do is find a spot to watch the sunrise and the sunset. The advantage of being on a ridge is the ability to see both. As you drive through Brown County State Park, there are beautiful spots that face east and beautiful spots that face west. All of them are above the tree line. So you get the best of both worlds.

Morning people are able to see the sunrise. Night people are able to see the sunset.

I’m a sunrise guy. There are few things more enjoyable to me than a quiet morning, a lawn chair, a hot cup of coffee, and finding a spot to watch the cold night sky change as the warm, morning sunrises. I love the way the sunbeams extend into the misty valleys. There’s something refreshing and worshipful about this scene for me.

I love to wait for the sun to rise.

This experience reminds me of Psalm 130:5-6.

“I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning” (Ps. 130:5–6).

I love the concept of being a watchman because I think it transforms how we think about waiting. Eugene Peterson, in *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, writes:

The words *wait* and *hope* are connected with the image of watchmen waiting through the night for the dawn. The connection provides important insights for the person in trouble who cries out, “But surely there is something for me to do!” The answer is yes, there is something for you to do, or more exactly there is someone you can *be*: be a watchman.¹

Take note of that—there’s someone you can be.

That’s important because how you think of yourself has a direct effect on how you approach waiting. During our series on the book of Isaiah, I gave you the illustration about thinking of waiting as someone in line at the BMV or as a groom waiting for his bride to enter. There’s a huge difference, isn’t there?

We’re going to explore this identity/role issue as we look at Psalm 27 and the theme of trust.

In the month of Advent, we’re learning what waiting looks like. Last week, our focus—from Psalm 40—was on the word “truth.” I challenged you to consider the idea that waiting means that there’s a lot you don’t know about your life but there’s a lot you *do* know about God. Much of the Christian life involves waiting for the daily provision from the Lord: you can’t buy manna in bulk.²

The first step is knowing that’s true. The second step is living in light of it—trust. It’s one thing to know that the sun rises in the east every morning. It’s another thing to get your lawn chair out and be a watchman.

And we’re going to take another step in learning how not to waste our waiting.

Psalm 27 is very practical, and I’d like to give you something to remember for those moments when you are struggling to wait. I’ve put some action steps in an acrostic—FAST.

- Focus
- Adore
- Seek
- Trust

¹ Eugene H. Peterson, [*A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*](#), Commemorative Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2019), 136.

² Betsy Childs Howard, [*Seasons of Waiting: Walking by Faith When Dreams Are Delayed*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

Let's look at each of these to see how they help us wait.

1. Focus

I think one of the hardest things about waiting is the way in which whatever you are waiting for can occupy a lot of energy, take over your life, or even become an obsession. It might sound like this:

- “What is going on? Why is this taking so long?”
- “If I haven't heard anything yet, it must mean. . .”
- “I've got to figure out what is going on. I need to. . .”
- “What have I done wrong that I can't get an answer?”

When you are in that frame of mind, it is extremely easy to be singularly focused on what you don't know or what you don't have. Remember that the word wait (qavah) means to look forward to something or anticipate the arrival of something.

Last week I invited you to consider what you know about God. This knowledge of God is what enables you, and what enables me, to wait. Waiting is choosing to focus on what I know about the Lord instead of panicking about what I don't know about my life. In the same way that waiting patiently means waiting and waiting, this next step involves the intentionally rehearsing.

Waiting involves making our way toward trust.

Notice this in verse 1 and the affirmative statements about the Lord:

- “The Lord is my light and my salvation. . .”
- “The Lord is the stronghold of my life. . .”

These metaphors are important. Darkness in the Bible is associated with disorder, evil, and confusion.³ And it can be overwhelming. Perhaps you've recently described a situation with that kind of language: “This feels really dark.” It's how we might articulate something that is really scary. If you look at verse one, you'll see the words “fear” and “afraid.”

But if you look at what David says in verse 1, it's not just that circumstances are scary—it's the people that are scary. He says “whom shall I fear” and “whom shall I be afraid.” Verses 2-3 make this point more directly. David describes that evildoers are assailing him, and the text uses the idiom. “eat up my flesh” which likely refers to slanderous words. What's more, it appears that his trouble has multiplied. In verse 3, David describes the opposition like an army and as though war has risen against him.

³ Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. David G. Firth, vol. 15–16, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014), 149.

Any type of hard situation can create a challenging situation for waiting. What I'm about to share relates to every kind of moment when God calls you to wait. But this is especially true when you are waiting for personal vindication because of what people are saying or when they are doing evil things.

David turns his focus to who the Lord is. Rather than focusing on the hard, painful, or scary circumstances, he directs his attention to who the Lord is.

- **The Lord is my light.** The doesn't simply mean that the Lord provides light. No, the idea is that the Lord is the one who can change everything. Darkness is dispelled by the presence of the Lord. He is with you—especially when it's dark.
- **The Lord is my salvation.** Here's another way to say the same thing, but it's more about deliverance. The Lord is not only able to dispel the darkness, he's personally able to rescue his people.
- **The Lord is the stronghold of my life.** This is a wonderful image of refuge and safety. When we face emotional insecurity, we can run to the Lord.

Now, when I read Psalm 27, it's easy to focus my attention on the words like "light," "salvation," and stronghold. Don't get me wrong—those are important words. But the main point and the main focus here is on the Lord. You might want to read it backward: My light is the Lord. My salvation is the Lord. My stronghold is the Lord.

So, when you are struggling to wait, the path to trust begins by rehearsing what you know to be true about the Lord. It begins when we overwhelm our fears, anxieties, frustrations, and despair by focusing on who the Lord is. A few examples:

- The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield; and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Ps. 18:2)
- The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want (Ps. 23:1)
- The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit (Ps. 34:18)
- The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works (Ps. 145:17)

I've developed a list of over thirty-five other verses that you can pray through on my blog, and we'll post the list on CPC Resources as well on Monday morning. The first step in waiting is to focus your thoughts on the Lord.

2. Adore

The second step is moving from intentional thinking to heart-oriented worship. It's transitioning from focusing to adoring. This step pushes our affections in the right direction. It's allowing the truth of who the Lord is to get into the emotional sections of our lives.

Waiting is emotionally challenging, isn't it? Sometimes our feelings are so strong and not even rational. But knowing that they don't make sense doesn't help. You move toward trust by eclipsing the hard emotions associated with waiting.

We see this in verses 4-6. David reaffirms what really matters. He rehearses what is truly important and valuable in his life: “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 inquire in his temple.”

Two noteworthy words are “beauty” and “inquire.” The word for beauty is a Hebrew word that is connected to the idea of favor, graciousness, and pleasant. It’s something pleasurable and good. Or you could think of it as glory. It’s the beauty of the Lord that displaces everything else.

To inquire has the sense of intentional effort to examine and to seek (see Ezek. 34:11, Prov. 20:25). Eugene Peterson paraphrases this as “. . . I’ll contemplate his beauty; I’ll study at his feet.”⁴ This is the environment in which our hearts are most inclined to adore God. Where is that for you? What’s the way that your heart is most inclined to adoration and worship? Perhaps it is:

- Sunday morning worship—as we sing, study God’s Word, receive the Lord’s Supper, and take Communion
- Personal time in the Word
- Memorization or meditation on a passage
- Listening to favorite music
- A walk in the woods or watching the sunrise
- Quiet reflection
- Encouragement from friend

We are not all the same, and you need to figure out what are the means of grace in your life that help you worship as you wait. One of the strategies for not wasting your waiting is knowing what helps you worship.

Notice the emotional effect on David in verses 5-6. He is comforted and content. God is practically becoming his refuge. He feels the protection of the Lord. His heart is filled with joy even though he has enemies all around him. He’s singing!

I have a playlist on my phone that I call “Morning Mercy.” It’s a list of songs that are particularly helpful in setting my thinking on a right path. When I’m struggling to wait on the Lord, these songs are particularly helpful to my soul.

This is not just an Old Testament concept. The writer of Hebrews instructs Christians who are facing concerning threats in the future to look to Jesus and “consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted” (Heb. 12:3).

⁴ Eugene H. Peterson, [*The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*](#) (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), Ps 27:4.

Are you waiting? Here's how you move toward trust: Focus your attention on the character of God. Adore him. Push your affections toward something greater than what you feel in the moment. Worship while you wait!

3. Seek

One of the things I love about Psalm 27 is that it shows us that waiting isn't passive. Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that waiting means we are doing nothing.

When you are waiting, you are still very active. In fact, waiting means that I'm seeking God's help in a new and even desperate way. In verses 7-12 there are ten requests.

- "Hear O Lord, when I cry aloud" (v. 7)
- "Be gracious to me" (v. 7)
- "Answer me" (v. 7)
- "Hide not your face from me" (v. 9)
- "Turn not your servant away in anger" (v. 9)
- "Cast me not off" (v. 9)
- "Forsake me not" (v. 9)
- "Teach me your way, O Lord (v. 11)
- "Lead me on a level path" (v. 11)
- "Give me not up to the will of my adversaries" (v. 12)

Those are a lot of requests! And that's what we do when we wait. We're not in control so we talk to the One who is in control. We don't know, so we talk to the One who does know. Eugene Peterson says this:

Hoping does not mean doing nothing. It is not fatalistic resignation. It means going about our assigned tasks, confident that God will provide the meaning and the conclusions. It is not compelled to work away at keeping up appearances with a bogus spirituality. It is the opposite of desperate and panicky manipulations, of scurrying and worrying.⁵

Don't make the mistake of thinking that waiting means you are doing nothing. Usually, it just means that you are not doing what you want to do. Biblical waiting is very active, very intentional. It seeks the Lord.

Waiting reminds us of who we are really seeking. So, keep seeking him. Pray as you wait.

4. Trust

We've arrived at our destination! This is where focusing, adoring, and seeking are designed to lead us. Waiting involves taking what we know and living on it. That's trust!

⁵ Eugene H. Peterson, [*A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*](#), Commemorative Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2019), 138.

Verse 13 offers this confident statement: “I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!” This is an affirmation that we are going to see God’s goodness. And this isn’t just a promise to be embraced in the future. It’s a bold confession of trust—right now.

God is good! All the time! David may not know what the future may hold, but he knows who holds the future. He may not see how something is good, but he knows that God is good. Therefore, we can receive the concluding command:

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! (Ps. 27:14)

Imagine that you want to watch the sunrise. You imagine a great event for your family with warm blankets, hot coffee, and cinnamon rolls. But what happens if there aren’t enough blankets, you forgot the creamer, and the cinnamon rolls are underbaked? What happens if you plan to meet friends at a special spot, and they are late or the little kids are fussy. You could be so busy preparing and organizing and “doing” that you miss the sunrise!

For some of you, that is what you might need to hear today: don’t miss the sunrise!

Others may just need the encouragement to have a seat, raise their eyes, and wait for the sun of God’s goodness to rise again.

Focus your heart on him. Adore him. Seek him. Trust him.

Trust the truth you know: “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!” (Ps. 27:14)

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