

SERMON – “Trust In God” - January 23, 2005
Text: Psalm 27:1-9

Trust is one of our outcomes that we continue to work toward. The first and most important step in developing trust in a faith community is stated as our number one stepping stone. We must put our trust in God. Not to trust first in human endeavors, ideas, or even faithful trustworthy people. No, we are to put our trust in God. In spite of any circumstance we face, membership decline, a deficit budget, an economic recession, deteriorating health, fighting cancer, a broken relationship, or struggling academically or socially in school: No matter how dire it may appear, we are to put our ultimate trust in God. What does that mean exactly?

Psalm 27 is a psalm about trusting God. The psalmist is praying this psalm in the sanctuary of the temple. It was probably a psalm that David prayed as he faced enormous enemies that could overwhelm and defeat him and his armies. But in the quiet of the sanctuary he prays this trusting prayer. In our sanctuary this morning let us explore this comforting psalm of trust.

In the opening verses of 1-3 of Psalm 27 we have a profession of faith. The psalmist proclaims, “God is my light and my salvation.” God is declared the source and giver of life and light. This declaration causes the reader to recall the memory of creation in Genesis. Out of chaos and out of darkness God created order, brought light in the midst of darkness and then created life. Professing God as “my light and my salvation” invites the reader of the psalm to remember past experiences in which God has lit up the darkness of our lives, and has saved us from danger or destruction. David may have remembered how God

saved him from Goliath by using his skill of a slingshot, a skill he had honed as a shepherd. This profession of God as my light and my salvation is similar as saying God is my shepherd who protects and feeds me, and leads me safely. How has God been your light and salvation as you remember God's past actions in your life? (silence for reflection.)

As we remember God's saving action in our lives we can proclaim as our profession of faith that "God is my light and my salvation!"

Then in the second part of verse one the psalmist declares another profession and a question. God is my stronghold, and if I state this truly, then of whom shall I be afraid? Is he or she going to choose to live in fear or is he/she going to trust in God that will see them through this difficult situation? This is the same question that we ask during trials and fearful times in our lives. If I profess God to be my shepherd, my light, my salvation, my protector, my stronghold, then am I'm going to give power to fear that leads me to cower and be paralyzed or even run away? Or am I'm going to trust God to give me the courage and strength to face the trail and walk through it to see the light again?

Listen to this old English fable. There was a man who was watching a sunset and did not want to be in the coming darkness so decided that the quickest way to keep in the light and get to the sunrise was to run toward the sunset. Another man saw the tired desperate man and asked him what he was doing. The man pursuing everlasting light told him of his plan. The gentleman looked at the tired man and said, you're going the wrong direction. To get to the light quicker is to run east into the darkness toward the sunrise.

We many times make the mistake of running from our trials, instead of facing them. The problem being we are delaying experiencing the light. We are letting fear rule over our lives instead of trusting God to see us through the trial. People do this when they refuse to get tests for cancer or even get physicals because they fear having something that will endanger their health. The problem is that fear is preventing them to take preventative steps. I've seen this behavior when people choose not to face conflict in order to resolve it. Instead they run from it and choose to live separated from each other rather than being reconciled with each other. Institutions, like churches, choose not to face problems because they fear the work will be overwhelming and they are fearful of the unknown change that may take place. But not trusting in God to face the darkness, the trials, we are taking the longer route to see the sunrise of new beginnings and new life.

This is not saying that the darkness cannot be overwhelmingly scary. The psalmist clearly states that the enemies were fierce and facing pending war is indeed dark and scary. However, in trust David goes to the sanctuary, where God resides, to receive light that will give courage, and strength to face the trial. Going to the sanctuary, the place of refuge, a place of going to the source greater than all of creation is the way to get the help, courage, and rest needed to continue the journey.

So where do we go to request God's help? To listen to God's voice? To be spiritual strengthened and given courage to face the darkness? The answer is the church, the body of Christ, and specifically in the sanctuary where the

people come to worship God who is present, and where the Body of Christ gathers to sing and pray together. The sanctuary is to be a safe place to come to meet God. Many have sat in these pews and prayer for strength and comfort as they say their final good byes to a loved in a funeral or memorial service; or prayed for help in looking for a job or facing difficult financial situations; or for the strength to face their own death; many like myself have sat in this sanctuary to pray for healing and the strength and ability to carry out lives responsibilities, for me it was caring for my ill husband, building a house, and pasturing this church. Yes coming into the sanctuary we hope to meet God and entrust to God our desperate prayers.

One Sunday a young African American woman came into our sanctuary about 30 minutes before worship. She sat quietly crying, and praying. Vernon pointed her out to me. I sat next to her briefly and said a prayer with her, and as deacon sat next to her during worship. I visited her the next day in her apartment just east of our church. She was scared and she never articulated what she was afraid of. But when I asked her why she came to church. She said her mother and grandmother told her that if she was ever scared and need help form God to go to the nearest church and pray. When scared and panic she followed her mother and grandmother's advice. She came to our church and received the strength she needed to go on. She said she felt stronger and calmer after coming into our sanctuary meeting God and worshipping with us.

Now we all know through past and recent history that danger doesn't respect staying out of the church. We know from the experience of Rex's, our

janitor, assault. In recent months we have heard of shooting in a church in Denver. Through television we witnessed the horror in Rwanda, when thousands of Christians took refuge in their churches, but the violence and slaughter did not stay out. Millions were slain within the churches. Bishop Romero, a champion of the poor in El Salvador was assassinated as he was serving communion to his parish.

So what does the sanctuary offer us? It is a place to affirm our trust in God and then leave having the strength and courage to face that darkness. It means trusting God to give us the courage to face the challenge of making up the \$25,000 budget deficit. It means trusting God as a faith community in this exciting journey we are toward new life when the road is unclear and unfamiliar. Although in our overwhelming and scary future we in this sanctuary put our trust in God and pray prayers of faith. These are not prayers of wishes, but prayers of trusting the results in God's Holy Spirit and then in this faithful trust taking action we will witness the actions of God that will bring new life and light.

You see, this sanctuary is the place where we are reconnected to the God who is our salvation and light. The sanctuary is the place where we can in faithful trust petition, "Come, seek his face." Let us trust God as we worship in this sanctuary so we can face our trials and dark times. "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?" The answer is no one and nothing. Therefore no matter what we face personally or collectively as a congregation, yet will we trust in God and walk forward through darkness into light!

