



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	Unless We Have Seen the Goodness of the Lord	SPEAKER	Pastor Jeffrey Aw
THEME	Unless	DATE	22 & 23 October 2022

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Pastor Jeffrey Aw shared a message of hope based on Psalm 27:11-14, where we see how King David's dependency on God enabled him to remain faithful to God amidst the storm of opposition and conflict. The pivotal verse is verse 13 (NASB 1995) *"I would have despaired **unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.**"*

Looking at the bigger picture of Psalm 27, we realise that it is both a psalm of trust and a psalm for help. The first 3 verses are ones of confidence in the LORD. Beginning with familiar questions, "If God is my light and my salvation and my stronghold, what or who is there to fear?" The third verse gives a possible circumstance for fear - an enemy in war.

The next 7 verses from v4-10 move from being under siege from an enemy to "the house of the Lord" where David spoke of his longing for the LORD and the chance to stand in God's presence. It then moves back to fear, uncertainty and a plea for help. Even though his father or mother have forsaken him, the LORD will not abandon David but will take him in. The final 4 verses - the focus of Pastor Jeff's sharing - speaks of David's faith in the Lord in the midst of the storm of fear and opposition. Encouraged, David moves forward, confident that in the "goodness of the Lord", he can wait and hope and be courageous until the storm passes by.

LESSONS FROM PSALMS 27:11-14 (ESV)

1. Focus on His Word

Verse 11 - "Teach me your way O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies." David understood that God is all powerful and wise and He leads us on a level path, the very path of life. Therefore, God's way is the best way to face his enemies. The Word of God gives us insight and wisdom in this area.

Verse 12 - "Give me not up the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence." David laments to God about his adversaries and false witnesses. They are those who have come against him and accuse him of things that are unfounded or unclarified. Furthermore, such adversaries and false witnesses breathe out violence - physically, emotionally or relationally – against David.

With reference to Proverbs 25:21-22 and Romans 12:19, the ways of the Kingdom are often paradoxical. Ps Jeff tells us to not just bear with our enemies, but to forgive them, to do good to them. We need not take our own revenge. God himself will act on our behalf. Our job is to forgive and love our enemies. Matt 18:15-17 provides a useful template for managing conflict with a fellow believer. The heart of God is always for restoration, reconciliation and peace, not condemnation and accusation.

2. Focus on His goodness

King David had faith in God's goodness. *"I would have despaired, unless I had believed I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (verse 13, NASB 1995).* The word "unless" is a double negative. Together with the earlier phrase "I would have despaired", it was inserted by Bible translators to emphasize the certainty of David's belief or faith in the Lord.

The word "believe" comes from the word "Amen" which is the root word for amen. It means a clear conviction in something or someone. What is the "goodness of the Lord"? It refers to God being our Light and Salvation (v1); Protector of our lives (v1); Defender against our enemies (v2); our Courage and Confidence (v3); Lifter of our heads (v6); God who hears (v7); God who sought us (v8); our Helper (v9); and God who cherishes us (v10). What is "in the land of the living"? It is in the land we live in.

3. Focus on His sovereignty

God's sovereignty requires us to do all that we can while trusting God for His Word, his goodness and his timing. *"Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!" (verse 14)*

The word "wait" means "kaveh" in Hebrews. It does not mean waiting like sitting ducks, rather, it means waiting with expectation and hope! Sometimes when we are being attacked, we cannot be like Rambo and face all the attacks head on. We need to take cover, wait for reinforcements by asking the Lord for help. We wait for God to intervene. *"Those who wait for the Lord will renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:13).* As such, we can take courage and not lose heart.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Psalm 27:11-14 has given us 3 keys to navigate dark times of opposition and fear. The Word of God gives us wisdom to handle conflict. The Goodness of God gives us hope to live. Lastly, the Sovereignty of God convinces us to trust in God's timing. Let us cling to all 3 God-given keys and give God praise in the midst of opposition and fear.

QUESTIONS

1. How has the Lord been good to you over the past week? Share a thanksgiving.

2. Psalm 27 begins with praise, moves to lament and uncertainty, and then returns to praise. It is cyclical, just as our lives are - we praise, we cry, we praise. Share what resonated most with you from the 3 lessons of Psalm 27:11-14 and why .

3. Consider the opposition or fear that you are currently facing. Share how you can wait with expectant hope that the Lord will intervene on your behalf.