

Series Title: **'Refreshed and Restored: A Summer in the Psalms'**

Message Title: **'Unfailing Love...Undaunted Faith'**

Scripture Source: **Psalm 27:7-14**

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### **Haunted**

This fear harasses and haunts many of us. There are few fears greater than that of being rejected or abandoned...left to fend for ourselves in an often cruel and cold world. Illustrate: personal story.

Not being wanted hurts deeply. It can be as seemingly 'little' as not being picked for a team during a recess break in public school. Can you identify? It can be as traumatic as being betrayed by your spouse or a friend...you are left, alone. How do you move forward? Where do you gain the strength, the desire to forge ahead?

David, the writer of Psalm 27 experienced similar emotional 'hauntings' as we do. Listen to his desperate prayer plea in verses 7-9:

'God, I yearn to experience your presence and love. Please don't abandon me. Please don't shut me out. Don't leave me alone and destitute. Don't write me off because of my weaknesses and failings. Don't give up on me.'

Does his yearning express your heart cry at times? It certainly does in my life journey. Vs. 10 "Though my father and mother forsake me..." Being an illegitimate child has marked and marred my soul. Being adopted has been a source of great gratitude and an undercurrent of fear. I have grappled with the fear of rejection and harsh judgment all my life. The fear of not measuring up to the expectations of others, whether as a family member, friend, or pastor. Sometimes that fear has been acute, sometimes it has waned. Yet, its presence is a constant.

How has that fear, that 'haunting' played out in my life? Struggles with anxiety, hunger for approval and reassurance that I am loved, and basically, OK. It has moved me to want to experience God's love and grace in deeply personal ways. And to share God's love and grace with others.

Let me ask you, how has the fear of rejection 'played out' in your life? Feedback from the floor!

### **Unfailing Love: Psalm 27:10**

These are some of the most reassuring and restorative words in Scripture. Seriously! People may abandon me. I may not be 'picked for the team', others may write me off for my failings, yet, God does not. "The LORD will receive me." These 5 words have the potential to 'refresh and restore' your life with its haunting and hungers, on a recurring basis.

Let's examine this strong and unflinching assertion. David believes in the existence of God. He affirms that God is 'eternal, unchanging, and faithful.' God can be trusted to provide for our deepest needs and longings. Why? Because at the core of his nature a warmth of generous love thrives. "The LORD will receive me." The word 'receive' is stunningly hope-infusing when understood accurately.

It means "to gather, to take to oneself, to receive, especially to one's hospitality and protection." Think of the most generous, warm-hearted, and welcoming person you know. They are a 'faint echo' of the heart and mindset of God towards you. Yes...you, if you and I are willing to turn to God, through faith in Jesus, He is already there, before you, with arms wide open, stretched to you, with a radiant, 'yes' face, drawing you into the sphere of his unfailing love.

Will you dare to believe this, over and over again? Two enlightening passages to underscore this truth of God's unfailing love. Isaiah 40:11 and Ephesians 3:16-19

Reflect on these Scriptures this week, write them out, mull them over. Apply them to your life, the good, bad and ugly!

### **Undaunted Faith: Psalm 27:11-14**

Rooted in God's unfailing love, David expresses a renewed resolve to know and do God's will. He is resolved to follow God's leadership even though opposition and harassment rises against him. Vss.11-12 'Undaunted' describes his faith perspective. "undismayed; not discouraged, not forced to abandon purpose or effort; undiminished in courage or valor, not giving way to fear, not put off, discouraged or beaten." See 2 Corinthians 4:7-18.

He reflects again upon the 'goodness of the LORD' and chooses a fact-based faith, not a feeling-based faith. This is huge. Notice what David says and why. "I am still confident of this: (language of faith) I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

David is 'tracking' tangible evidences of God's active, generous, and purposeful involvement in his life. To see is to 'experience and enjoy' the love and care of God along the way. "Goodness: that which is good or best...good to the senses, agreeable, pleasant...that which is useful, fit, and suitable." As he 'tracks' down God's involvement, he 'traces' it all back to the steadfast character of God. He is cultivating a fact-based faith in God. A thinking, observing, experiential faith in God.

He expresses resilience of faith: "Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." He faces life head on, with God and reminds himself and others to continue to trust God with the specifics of life. "Wait: to hope strongly, to trust, implying firmness and constancy of mind, to hope for, wait for...patiently and steadily."

### **You and Me**

This kind of relationship with God is why Jesus showed up. He died on the cross to pay the full penalty for our sins, so that the opportunity for a relationship with God could be made possible. When we study the life of Jesus we are given profound insights into the nature of God...a warm, forgiving, generosity of love that meets us where we are and leads us forward, sometimes, one faltering step at a time. Refreshed and restored little by little, day to day.

Some questions:

1. Can you acknowledge your deepest fears, including rejection and judgement? Can we help you with a listening ear?
2. Will you immerse yourself in God's word and other good books so that your understanding of God and Jesus matures and deepens? Book ideas: Disappointment with God, P. Yancey; Answering God, E. Peterson. Check out our library! Also, the Reading Plan.
3. Will you connect with other spiritually minded people for conversations and learning opportunities?

One final exercise that we are excited to offer: see response card. 'Tracking God's Goodness' This could be life enriching for each of us...I need to do this again. Each day, look for evidences of the goodness of God in your life. Be observant and thoughtful...don't dismiss 'little things' and don't assign things to chance. Choose to see and acknowledge the active and generous care, warmth, and goodness of God in your life. Even though in 'the land of the living' there is violence, heartbreak, injustice, and suffering. These awful realities remind us of the fact of sin, brokenness, and alienation from God and others. Yet, if we would experience renewals of hope and live to make a difference in the world around us, we must choose to 'track' evidences of God's presence and goodness, and 'trace' it all back to the unfailing love of God. And as we do this in the flow of life, we will look for ways and opportunities to 'tell' others of God's grace, the sacrifice of Jesus, and hope we have in a Risen Saviour who calls and equips us to tell others where to turn and who to learn to trust...Jesus Christ, God 'with the skin on.'