

Intro: *The early monastics had a name for it. St John of the Cross gave it the title: The Dark Night of the Soul Even the name is evocative, isn't it? It speaks to the time in our hearts and lives when we feel like God has abandoned us, has walked away and left us...and is no where to be found. We pray...even though we don't want to...and it feels like he doesn't hear. We look at the world around us, and we wonder...where did he go? All the things that once brought us joy and peace...seem empty and dry. Worship has lost its attraction, life has lost its joy, and every day is black and white...no color!*

What do you do when you find yourself in that place? How do you go forward? How do you seek after God?
Psalm 27 I think I written to answer that question. How do you Seek God...When He Seems No Where To Be Found?

Psalm 27 Page 393

1. Remember The God You Are Pursuing.

Vs 1

You may not be able to sense Him now...But you have in the past...So you can draw upon that.

Instead of focusing on what you DON'T know...Focus on what you DO know. Remember who God is...what He has done

- **Light:** God will be the one who gives you light for living! Your word is a light to my feet and a lamp to my path!
Isa 60:19 *The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.*
- **Salvation:** Liberty; deliverance; safety; salvation
God is the one who is my salvation. I can trust in Him!
I remember where I was without Him...and Now I can see where I am WITH Him!
- **Stronghold:** My strength, my defense, my rock, my fortified place.
Every time in the past that I needed help, God has been there for me. He has been the one I can always run to.
When I remember that...It builds my faith, makes me strong for the future...even though I can't SEE, I KNOW!

Applic: That was the prayer of Habakkuk! In the midst of an awful time in the nation of Israel's history, with culture falling apart around them, and the threat of invasion and destruction imminent, Habakkuk prayed:

"LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy." Hab 3:2

2. Don't Get Sidetracked By Your Circumstances.

Vs 2-3

When it feels like everything is falling apart around us, and God is nowhere to be found, it is very easy to pursue wrong things

Instead of seeking after God, we find ourselves captured by every problem, trial, tribulation and trouble that comes along

David in Psm 27, says, "Don't do it!" Don't allow the evil one to have you off track, pursuing the wrong things. Seek God!

- **Evil Advance:** *"When they draw near to "eat me up!" This is bad! Poetic..but Powerful imagery*
- **Enemies Attack:** *"When they besiege me, draw near and join together to attack and harm me"*
- **Armies Besiege:** *When whole armies, tent cities of attacking soldiers surround me...pin me down*
- **War Breaks Out:** *When war is not threatened...but is in fact a reality. When people are dying....*

Applic: All of those things are real. All of those things are concerning. All of those things need our time and attention. But NONE of those things are ultimately the issue. The issue is, Where Is God in the midst of all of these things. Because if God is there, there is nothing to fear!

- I am not going to be afraid Not fear; not be frightened; not concerned
- I am going to be confident! Confident; sure, bold; secure
"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Ps 91:1
Don't get sidetracked...regardless of circumstances...keep your mind, heart, spirit...SET ON GOD!
Paul tells us: "Set your hearts on things above"

3. Keep Your Focus On Pursuing God.

Vs 4-12

This is the body of the Psalm, there are a number of different ways David tells us to follow after God!

- **Prayer:** Are you Praying?
Vs 4: Ask *To ask, to beg, to desire, to request of someone:"* Couple of weeks ago: God, I need you to show up!
Vs 4: Seek *To search out, to strive after, to pursue: (Often used of doing this in prayer and worship!)*
Vs 4: Gaze *To look upon, to see intently; to contemplate (Not a passing glance, but to examine!)*
Vs 7: Hear my voice when I call: *Hear me when I cry out loud for you! "Call from a distance...Hey YOU!"*
- **Turning to Him in Times of Trouble:** Who do you turn to?
Vs 5: In days of trouble: *Bad, Calamity, Hurtful, Harmful, Adversity (General word for bad days)*
Vs 5: Keep me safe: *To protect, to keep secret and private (No one will know im here!)*
Vs 5: Hide me: *To cover me over or up, to conceal me so I cant be seen!*
Vs 5: Set me high: *to raise me up, lift me up, hold me up out of reach of my enemies*
Vs 8: Your face will I seek! *Search me out in worship; Pursue me; Desire me; Ask for me; Beg for me*

Our problem often is, when trouble comes...we go to everyone else FIRST...God is Our LAST RESORT!
Nothing left to DO...I guess I'm just going to have to PRAY!

- Look in the RIGHT places for Him: Are you looking in the RIGHT places? (Country Song)
"Looking for love in all the wrong places!"
- Where SHOULD we be looking for God? David Tells us!
- Vs 4;6 Place of worship: House of the Lord; Temple; Tabernacle; All the same place
- Vs 6: Place of praise: Find him when you sing! "I will sing and make music"
- Vs 11: Place of truth: Teach me your ways: Look for Him in the scriptures!

Applic: Look for Him in the most likely places!

Talk with people all the time: I feel alone and abandoned. I don't know where God is, can't sense Him at all

When was the last time you went to church? Months

When was the last time you entered into worship and praise, even though you didn't "feel like it"

When was the last time you sat with His word, studied it, read it, memorized it, lived it out.

When was the last time you spent any significant time in prayer...more than 5 minutes?

What I invariably discover is, oh it has been months...years.

Here is the reality: You MIGHT find a hundred dollar bill in the parking lot of the grocery store, possible
 Might find it on the beach, at the golf course, in the restaurant...at the Ravens, Nats, Redskins game: BUT
 But if you go to the BANK, and look in the vault...you are almost guaranteed to find one!
 Look for God...where He is most likely to be found! Boat; Golf Course; In bed; At beach... He's in all those places

4. Wait In Faith For God To Reveal Himself. Vs 13-14

Couple of years ago I did a series that I titled "Jack in the Box Jesus!" Remember that?

You have played with a Jack in the Box, right? Wind the handle...and at Just the right time...top pops open...there is Jack!
 Many of us mistakenly think we can treat God that way! We do what we are supposed to do..."Twist handle"

Give, Pray, Worship, Go To Small Group, Serve

Pop Goes the Jesus! Right out of the Box to give us exactly what we want!

David says: No. You can do everything right...and Still you have to Wait in Faith For God to reveal Himself.

- **Confident:** *I have assurance; I am steadfast; I believe with all my heart!*
 I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living: I will see God's goodness in my life while I'm alive!
- **Wait:** *Gather yourself (stuff) together expectantly; Be patient; Tarry; Gather yourself together...and wait!*
- **Be Strong:** *Fortify yourself, harden yourself; pull yourself together: Get READY!*
- **Take Heart:** *He will give you courage and strength, He will provide all you need!*

CONCL: WE all go through those times in our spiritual life when it feels like God is nowhere to be found.

He is there...but we can't SENSE him!

At those times, We simply have to trust that He will do what He has said

And when the time is right...and He is ready...we will see His hand at work. He promised that!

Pr 8:17 *"I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me."*

Jer 29:13 *"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*

CONCL: There really is NO SUCH THING as a Jesus in the Box!

No matter how many times you turn the handle...He isn't going to pop out!

So...A couple of questions you need to ask yourself if you are seeking after God this morning.

If it feels like you haven't seen him, sensed him, felt him in a long long time:

4 Questions To Ask Yourself This Morning

1. Do you need to remember the God you are Pursuing? "Heard of Him...ask him to renew his work"
2. Do you need to get back on track...quit following side issues...and pursue God "Put him first"
3. Have you got your focus on Him...and Are you looking for Him in the right places?
 Prayer; Worship; Church;
4. Are you willing to wait in faith. Confident, strong, secure...God Will come through