

"I Will Not Be Afraid" – Psalm 27:1–4 – Pastor Kazumitsu Kimura

Kurigasawa Baptist Church

October 12, 2025 – Sunday Worship Message

The Psalm we read this morning, Psalm 27, begins with the title "A Psalm of David." David was the man who served King Saul, the first anointed king, gained strength, and eventually inherited the kingdom from Saul. He subdued the surrounding nations and established the largest territory in Israel's history. Even today, the Star of David, symbolized on Israel's national flag, represents this great hero of the Jewish people. However, what truly supported David at the deepest level of his being was his trust in the Lord God, Yahweh. When David wrote this psalm, he was no longer in the prime of his life but rather approaching old age, feeling weakness and decline. Moreover, his family was torn by conflict among his sons, and his son Absalom had even rebelled against him. Yet, what sustained David through all these trials was his faith in the Lord. With that background in mind, let us look together at Psalm 27 today.

Verse 1 says, *"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?"* Here, David calls God "my light." Have you ever experienced total darkness? When I was about nine years old, I went to the autumn festival at Shiratori Shrine with my two older brothers and some neighborhood friends. The shrine, located in what is now Higashikagawa City, was about 16 kilometers away, down the mountain toward the seaside town of Shiratori. Going there was easy because it was downhill. We left in the morning and arrived around noon. After spending the day enjoying the festival and its attractions, we suddenly realized it was getting dark and decided to head home. The return trip, however, was uphill and much harder. Before long, night had fallen, and it became completely dark. Fortunately, my mother's parents' house was halfway home, so we stopped there and called my father to come and pick us up. My father came on his motorcycle, and since I was the smallest, I rode on the back with him. There were no streetlights back then—almost 60 years ago in the countryside. I still remember that ride vividly: clinging to my father's back, climbing the pitch-dark mountain road, relying only on the headlight. I was truly afraid. The most important role of light is "to shine in the darkness." When we walk on a dark path, we cannot reach our destination without light. God being light means that He guides our life's journey. When I first stepped into a church at age 20, I was filled with vague anxiety and restlessness. I didn't know how to live or what direction to take. Looking back now, I realize I was searching for a clear compass to navigate the rough seas of life.

It did not come to me immediately. But after attending worship for a year or two, I began to understand: to live not for myself, but in a way that pleases God. God delights when we use our talents for His purpose, and as a result, that brings joy to others as well.

The second half of verse 1 says, "The Lord is the stronghold of my life." What is a stronghold? It is a fortress built to protect from enemy attacks. In Palestine, such fortresses were made of stone—walls and foundations built from layered rock to defend against invaders. When enemies attacked, people would flee into the fortress for safety. In Japan's Warring States period, a "stronghold" was like an outer fort built apart from the main castle—a place of refuge where one could feel safe. David declares, "The Lord is the stronghold of my life," meaning that whoever takes refuge in Him will find perfect safety. I recall the testimony of a man in my former church who had served as a deacon for many years. In his thirties, he quit his salaried job and started his own small business. The early days were difficult, and his marriage began to suffer. During that time, his wife started attending church. Hearing that, he decided to go with her, and eventually they both received baptism together. He later said that joining the church felt like "rushing into a temple for refuge." For him, the church became that place of refuge. Life as a business owner was

consuming, and even at home, work-related worries followed him. But through worship services, sermons, and Scripture, he found comfort, encouragement, and renewed strength. Isn't that wonderful? I believe it's perfectly fine if the church serves as such a "refuge for the heart." May our church continue to be that stronghold for people in need.

Verse 2 says, "[When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh...](#)" We do not know exactly who these "evildoers" were—perhaps his son Absalom, perhaps enemies like the Philistines—but David felt that destruction was closing in. In verse 3, he says, "Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." Here, David clearly envisions warfare. Yet even in such a terrifying situation, he declares, "[My heart will not fear.](#)" What is fear? It is the negative emotion that arises when we face danger or threat to our safety or life. Fear can cause physical reactions—pale face, cold sweat, trembling, rapid heartbeat. But David says he can overcome fear because he has confidence—trust—in God. Faith in God makes one fearless, even in the face of death. Why does faith remove fear? Because God has already won the victory. The late actress Kirin Kiki, who passed away in 2018 at the age of 75, lived with cancer that had spread throughout her body. Yet she continued her acting career with remarkable composure. She used to say, "I'm not afraid of death." True strength lies in this: the ability to accept and absorb the negative, turning it powerless. Just as a judoka becomes stronger by learning to take falls, and as success often follows repeated failure, faith enables us to rise above suffering. Professor Shimon Sakaguchi, who won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, also achieved his breakthrough through steady, persistent research with his wife by his side. Jesus, too, accepted His own death and walked the road to the cross—and then He rose again. Let us, likewise, face our hardships and overcome them through faith.

Finally, verse 4 says, "[One thing I ask of the Lord; this is what I seek.](#)" Earlier, our choir sang beautifully about this. "One thing" means "the first and foremost." Though we may have many wishes, the most important is "to dwell in the house of the Lord." To dwell in God's house means to become His guest—to receive His hospitality and protection, and to follow Him with gratitude. In verse 5 (not read today), it says, "[He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble.](#)" In the Middle Eastern desert, if a person being pursued entered the tent of someone camping there, they were no longer chased. They were safe. To dwell in the Lord's house is to live within God's protection. Ultimately, what safeguards us is not our position, education, or wealth—but God Himself. When the love of the Lord envelops our hearts and bodies, we experience true joy.

This psalm goes on to describe two purposes for dwelling in the Lord's house. The first is to experience "the joy of gazing upon the beauty of the Lord." Our hearts are filled when we encounter God's grace. By dwelling in His house, we draw near to Him. The second purpose is to worship and praise the Lord. Indeed, worship can be offered anywhere, for God is Spirit. Yet David confessed that the most fitting place for worship was the Lord's tabernacle—the temple. David brought the Ark of the Covenant to the tent in Jerusalem, and his son Solomon built the temple there to consecrate it as God's dwelling place.

Today, as we gather here for Sunday worship, two forms of consecration take place. First, we dedicate a specific time within our week to God. Second, we set apart this physical space—the sanctuary—to step closer to Him. In doing so, we sanctify ourselves and draw near to the Lord. David declared that as long as he lived, he wanted to dwell in the house of the Lord, for he believed God's presence was there. Through weekly worship, we too die to our old selves, receive new life, and are transformed each time. Next Sunday, we will hold a special worship service. God will surely bring new encounters then as well. Let us look forward each week to meeting Him with joy and gratitude. To dwell in the Lord's house is to experience His grace and joy in our very being.

Let us pray.