

### Introduction

At the end of 2008, people started talking about a worldwide melt down – using big words like ‘recession’ and ‘depression’ meaning that the world economy was on the brink of collapse. Many Christians have been carried along by this kind of talk. But a famous Christian once said, ‘not everything is getting worse – I’m getting better’. What he meant was that we need to take a fresh look at the world through the Word of God and not listen to what the world says. The reality is that even if the world gets worse, people of God should be shining even more brightly and bringing hope.

The Amplified Bible says that in 2 Timothy 1.7, “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.”

This is the kind of attitude God wants us to choose to have, with his help – and to live lives of hope that reflect this – not worrying or being fearful, but instead living lives of power, love, being calm, well-balanced and with self-control.

### Psalm 37 and ‘Recession’

Psalm 37 also says 2 very helpful things about difficult times. God promises to be with his people, always. So we know that even in times of famine, hardship and disaster, God is always looking out for us and helping us.

Psalm 37.19 – In times of disaster they will not wither; in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.

Psalm 37.25 – I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

### The first challenge is this:

Around the world, there are tens of thousands of Christians persecuted and abused or killed because of their faith. One estimate for 2018 found there were 4,136 Christians killed directly because of their faith. [Open Doors](#) (accessed May 2019) state that every month:

- 345 Christians are killed for faith-related reasons
- 105 Churches and Christian buildings are burned or attacked
- 219 Christians are detained without trial, arrested, sentenced and imprisoned

What are we doing to help them? You could easily donate money to the persecuted church, write to them and let them know you’re praying for them and standing with them and more. See [Release International](#) among others. You see, God provides but he often uses us.

In the West we have so much. Let's give sacrificially to support our friends – our brothers and sisters – the family of God. Their faith is a challenge to us, so let's give what we have..

## Psalm 27 – Read this out together like a declaration and promise

[Download Psalm 27 to read out as a PowerPoint](#)

*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?  
When evil men advance against me  
to devour my flesh,  
when my enemies and my foes attack me,  
they will stumble and fall.*

*Though an army besiege me,  
my heart will not fear;  
though war break out against me,  
even then will I be confident.*

*One thing I ask of the LORD,  
this is what I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD  
and to seek him in his temple.*

*For in the day of trouble  
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;  
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle  
and set me high upon a rock.*

*Then my head will be exalted  
above the enemies who surround me;  
at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make music to the LORD.*

*Hear my voice when I call, O LORD;  
be merciful to me and answer me.*

*My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"  
Your face, LORD, I will seek.*

*Do not hide your face from me,  
do not turn your servant away in anger;  
you have been my helper.  
Do not reject me or forsake me,  
O God my Saviour.*

*Though my father and mother forsake me,  
the LORD will receive me.*

*Teach me your way, O LORD;  
lead me in a straight path  
because of my oppressors.*

*Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,  
for false witnesses rise up against me,  
breathing out violence.*

*I am still confident of this:  
I will see the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living.*

*Wait for the LORD;  
be strong and take heart  
and wait for the LORD.*

## Not of this world

God has told us that in this world we will have problems and trials. But he tells us not to worry, but to do the opposite – which is to trust in him and be at peace because he has already overcome the world.

1 John 16.3 – “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

What Jesus meant is that he knows this world, but when he died on the cross, he defeated the evil one and the world's systems and injustice. When we look at things around us, we need to choose to see and believe things from God's point of view – his Word and its truth.

When I was younger, I used to play imaginary games that I was some kind of super-hero, or secret agent in the world with super powers. I was a kind of Mr Incredible, or Spiderman type of figure. It was fantasy, just something I made up. Probably many of us have had these kinds of daydreams or imaginations.. How little I knew. The reality is that when we become Christians, we do have super-powers (through prayer and the Holy Spirit) and we are heroes in our very own story that God wrote for us ahead of time.

In John 15.19, Jesus says to his disciples (and to us today), “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

Jesus carried on to say in John 18.36 that, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

Colossians 3.1-3 also reminds us that, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."

What does this all tell us? It reminds us that we shouldn't think like the world, but instead should look up and think how God thinks. What is truth? Jesus is truth. We know that another name for Jesus is 'The Word' because John 1.14 talks about Jesus and says, 'The Word became flesh and lived among us'. So we know that the Word of God is the truth. We also know that the evil one is a liar and a deceiver, who comes only to rob, destroy and kill. So no matter what the world says and does, the things that God has spoken are higher and must take priority in the lives of God's people – that's you and me.

So if we are to live as men and women of God, what do we need to do? We need to get to know the Word. Someone once said you only love God as much as you spend time in his Word. So we read the Word because we love God. But we also need the Bible because it reveals light on the world, brings hope and change for us and others, and is the only real truth. If we know what the Bible has to say about something, we can stand strong in the promises of God for our own lives and for the many others around us. This is why learning the Bible and speaking it over your own life is so powerful – not just listening to the Word but doing it and believing it. This is why we started this talk with reading out Psalm 27 and 2 verses from Psalm 37.

## The Promises

In uncertain times, Psalms like Psalm 27 give us incredible assurances and God-filled truths. These are like God-infused spiritual bombs dropping in our own lives and in other people's lives, as we speak the Word of God and pray.. So let's dive-bomb in..

1. The Lord is our light, our salvation (the one who saves us), the stronghold of our lives – so we don't need to fear (Ps 27.1-2)
2. Even if enemies surround us, or war breaks out, or if there is famine – God will be there for us and provide for us (Ps 27.2-3, Ps 37.19)
3. In the day of trouble, God will keep us safe, shelter us and set us high up on a rock (Ps 27.5)
4. Even if your mother and father reject you, God never will and he will love you. The Amplified Bible says the Lord will take you up and adopt you as His child! (Ps 27.10)
5. God won't hand you over to your enemies, their lies or their violence (Ps 27.12)
6. God will always provide for our needs, no matter what the situation (Ps 37.25). See also Philippians 4.19 which says, *"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."*

7. KEY VERSE – “I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” (Ps 27.13)

Truth is, this world will one day fade away. In fact, all of creation is groaning and longing for the return of Jesus. So is the church (that’s you and me). But there is one great truth – we can be confident that we will see the goodness of the Lord in this life, in this world. Despite what else may be going on, God is good and wants the best for you, His plans are to prosper you, help you, provide for you, give you hope and a future.