

Assurance... I shall be satisfied... (Quality: good)

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Preacher: Dawson, Peter (1925-2014)

[0 : 0 0] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I will call your attention this evening to a subject you will find in the 17th Psalm and the last verse.

The 17th Psalm and the 15th verse. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.

I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.

I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. I feel to need much help in desiring to set this before you in a measure of orderliness.

But as the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I want to think upon it from several aspects.

[1 : 3 3] And to try to relate it a little to that blessed portion in the Gospel of John that we read together.

And to take a little to from the context of the psalm. The heading of the psalm would show to us that it is a psalm of David.

I am not able to say at what time in David's life that this psalm was written. We see that if we read the whole psalm, that it was not a time of complete prosperity with him.

It was in one of the times evidently when he was in a low place. And yet, there was given to him a spirit toward God which showed that there was a contentment.

And we can find this perhaps as a little of a paradox. But there was a contentment in his spirit, although there was not the prosperity in his circumstance.

[2 : 5 0] And although there was this contentment in his spirit, yet, and here we have this paradox, there was a desire that there should yet be satisfaction.

And here, I think, we find something that comes into the lives of the Lord's people.

Although they are given that spirit of contentment, and it is a spirit that we need to seek for, and we need to ask for, yet, in our own thoughts, in our own souls, we know that there will never be a satisfaction until we are brought into that final and complete contact with our Lord and Savior.

When we are brought into that place where, according to the word of God, we shall see him as he is, it will be then that we shall be able to say with David, I shall be satisfied.

But first, we will try and look upon the context, and very briefly, if we read it down, we see that there is this comparison between the wicked, and we find this quite often in the Psalms, and especially in David's Psalms, and others.

We find that there was one who saw the wicked spreading as a green bay tree, and he found that his spirit was toward them. Why is it that it is so for them, and it is different to him?

[4 : 3 1] And then he said, my feet had well and I slipped. And here we have something of the same understanding. David, earlier in this psalm, he said, Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

But he had been brought into this desire for leaning upon God, desire to be upheld by God, and he had been brought into that circumstance in his spirit, when he knew that whatever he could see in the wicked round about him, that he had a blessing.

He had a hope, an expectation, an assurance, which could never come into their experience, into their thoughts. And this is something that we need to learn from.

We find, sometimes in our own spirits, that there is a tendency to look upon those round about us. We see them, and sometimes they seem to have those things which are denied to us, and our hearts would tell us that they are lawful things, they are things which, perhaps they come under the heading of the good gifts of God to mankind, and we look upon these things, and perhaps there is, sometimes, a spirit of envy or of jealousy, and we sometimes find that there is a questioning in our own hearts of the treatment, which is toward, and so far as we can judge, of God toward his people.

But, oh, if such a spirit ever gets into us, and, oh, there have been those times, and we look back upon them sometimes, and with a measure of shame, but, if such a spirit gets into us, we need to think upon some of these Psalms.

[6 : 32] And we need to think, too, upon that comparison, which is given in the Psalms, and elsewhere in the Word of God, that those blessings, which are shown to the whole world, and sometimes it seems that those that fear not God have the greater share of them, yet they are but temporal.

They are short-lived blessings. And if you remember that a pastor used to say, little b blessings, but those blessings, which are eternal in their nature, those which we can call the perfect gifts of God, O these are eternal.

And when they are received, they shall never get less. The only possibility for them is that they shall increase, that there shall be a greater understanding of them, a deeper entering into them, until such time as that final consummation of them, when we shall enter into heaven itself.

And there we shall realize and know that that way in which we have been led and kept upon the earth was designed particularly and especially that we should be brought into heaven itself, and in God's time and way that we should be able perhaps to realize the fulfillment of this which was the psalmist's hope.

Now, firstly, as we think upon the verse, we want to think upon the psalmist's assurance, the assurance that was given to him.

[8 : 22] It was not a vain hope. The psalmist, as he had come, David, as he had come to this place at the end of the psalm, he knew that whatever he could see without, there was something within.

Whatever his reasoning might tell him, as he made those natural comparisons, yet, in his spirit he knew that there was something of his, something which was not of himself, and it was something that he could be certain about.

Do we ever get into this feeling? Oh, I believe we do. This is why the Lord has led us into his truth. This is why he has taught us of himself, that we should have that assurance, a measure of it, and if we remember a few week evenings back, we were shown, and shown very rightly, that this matter of assurance is the prerogative of God, and it comes in measure, and sometimes it seems to be but a faint measure, but this matter of assurance, where it is true assurance before God, like those other blessings, it is that which will increase, it is that which will grow, it is that which comes in the minds of those who are exercised for it, and it will be given to them as there is the exercise and desire, there will be given to those who are the subject of such a desire the increase or the growing in that grace of assurance.

It is sometimes given in great measure, but mostly it is that which comes line upon line, and precept upon precept, a little here and a little there, until it is possible that with the assurance of David, we should be able to say, as for me, as for me, I will behold thy face.

Now, David was not always in such a place as this. If we go into his history, and go away from his selves for a moment, oh, we shall find that there were times of darkness, there were times of sin, there were times when he felt to be cast out of the sight of God, and there were those times when his very behavior showed that there was not much exercise or concern for this assurance.

[11 : 12] Oh, but we dare not throw any stones at David before we start to look into our own hearts, and we find, and we find as we are subjected to a little self-examination, that there has not always been, in our own thoughts, and in our own desires, it has not always been our primary exercise, that we shall be able to have that measure of assurance.

Well, sometimes we have so greatly dwelt upon our fears and our faintings, that when we read a word like this, it is almost as a different language to us.

As for me, I will behold thy face. Oh, we think and we wonder at the grace that was afforded to David to be able to say it, but now look at David as we have already looked at him once, and see that this was a blessing that was given to him from God.

It was nothing which was of David himself, nor shall we find such a thought before God in our own hearts. We shall not find it if we seek for it of anything that is in ourselves.

Oh, it can only be found by that faith which is given of God. And this faith needed to be given to David. He needed it, and we see his need of it sometimes.

[12 : 43] One who was left to say, I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul, when he had been given a gracious indication of the purpose of God toward him, that he should be raised to the position of king of Israel, and yet he was left for the time being to lose that assurance that was given by the anointing oil by the prophet of God, and by the word of God, and to feel that even in natural things there was no good outlook.

Oh, so it is sometimes with us. We have, and we are given, and perhaps in the first warmth of that love toward God, when we know something of the beginning of his good work in our hearts, there is given to us a measure of assurance.

But oh, are we like David? And sometimes we let this measure of assurance, this blessing of God, become so far back in our minds, so much in the background, that we forget that it was the word of God, and God whose words are eternal, God whose words can never alter toward us, I know that we dare not rest and hope only upon that which is past.

But those earnest, those tokens, those helps in times past, are given of God that his people shall be helped and enabled to trust in him, to grow in grace, and to grow in faith.

These are the reasons why the Lord gives them to his people. As David had grown older, and as he looked back over his life, and likewise we see it with other of the people that are, the history has given to us, we see it with Jacob, and we see it with Abraham, they look back and they acknowledge the goodness of God, they point back at the evidences and the tokens that were given, and they see they all led to point to the faithfulness of God toward his people.

[15 : 08] And if we truly and honestly, sincerely before God, are enabled to look back upon those ways in which we have been led, in which we have been encouraged, in which we have been caused to hope, then we shall be able with a measure, and it may not be a great measure, but it will be a measure of assurance to read this verse, and perhaps to feel some hope or response in our own hearts toward the God that enabled David to say it with assurance, as for me, I will behold thy face.

And sometimes we have in our hearts the ability, and I think that it is a God-given ability, to see a measure of this grace in others.

And this is from time to time made for us a means of desire.

Now I haven't put this very clearly perhaps, but to dip into my own thoughts in this way, I can remember a conversation I had in this place of worship, not during a service, but when we were doing some work, which made it quite clear to me that some of those who are my brethren had this measure of hope given to them.

I remember the words that they spoke, and the tenor of them. It was not so much what they said as how they said it, and they said it with a solemnity and a truth that entered into my soul, and I felt that here were some men, men of God, who had been given something that I desired to have, and it was made an encouragement to me in this, that those things which seemed to be so remote from me, as I contemplated the experience of those who were shown in the scripture, here I saw, as I looked upon fellow creatures of my own generation, who were evidently sensing something of that same spirit, something of that assurance and hope that was shown and given to those in the scriptures yet made known to the Lord's people in this day, and I did find that it encouraged my seeking and my hoping, and I believe it was a means that the Lord used to bring me into a measure of assurance of his favour toward me, and I was able to say in measure, as for me, and to have that emphasis on the personal pronoun, and again you remember that we have been told many times that the personal pronouns are of vital importance, and to be able to say as for me,

[18 : 34] I shall behold thy face. Oh, there was that hope, that concern that there should be first the hope given, and with the concern a measure of hope imparted, and I'm sure of this too, that the reason why the Lord inspired David to write the psalm, was that those who were able to sing the psalm, and you remember the psalms were written for worship, that as they sang the psalm, that the words should enter into their hearts, as they considered the words which now we look upon as words of scripture, but to them, they were words that entered into the course of worship, even as we sing the hymns, as they considered the words, and as they sang them, that this manner of consideration, to look at those round about them, and then to look at the assurance and the hope that was given to the

Lord's people, should perhaps turn their minds into that same desire before God, that a hope, or an assurance, and a hope is that which leads to assurance, should be given to them, to have again such a confidence before God, as for me.

Oh, you think how many times, as you have sung the hymns that we have in our book, and you have felt that the hymn writer has entered into your experience, into your desire, how many times have the words of the hymn writer caused you, in a manner to offer a petition, a prayer unto God, that even if perhaps the language was high for you, so high that you felt that you could not attain to it yet, there was that desire that you would be brought into that measure of knowledge, of the grace of God.

Do you think of those who sang this of old, and realize that it was, so far as they would have known, it was the word of their king, of the Selmist David, but it was their word as they sang it, and they sang it before God, even as we sing the hymns in our worship before God.

as for me, I shall behold thy face. And I wonder how many of them, and I wonder how many of us, as the words have been before us, have perhaps thought of the meaning of the words, I shall behold thy face.

[21 : 27] First, that hope that there was the true ability to say, as for me, and then to realize just what was the Selmist's assurance.

I shall behold thy face. His anticipation. This was what he expected to do. Because he knew that the blessing of God was toward him, there was this certainty in his heart that the blessing of God had been manifested to him.

he could look back upon the experience of the Lord's blessing, and this led him to hope, to believe, that this privilege, which is almost beyond their imagination, I will behold thy face.

It should be made known in his, in his particular, in his personal knowledge of God. Now, as we look upon the word, the phrase before us, I will behold thy face.

I feel that perhaps there are two manners in which we can enter into this. I think the first was, the first that we must think of, the primary reason for this word, is in heaven.

[23 : 07] That this is the hope, the expectation, and as grace is given and as the Lord deepens his work in the hearts of his people, it comes into anticipation.

This is the hope of the Lord's people. This is their desire. This is why they seek his face on earth, that they shall be brought to that time and place or to that place.

I think the word time perhaps is out of place, but they shall be brought to that place where they shall, in reality, see his face.

face. To have some experience of those who are shown in the revelations, that they shall see his face.

But there you see, it was a little impersonal. We're looking upon others who should see his face, face, but here there is the personal approach to it, I will behold thy face.

[24 : 30] As for me, it is not possible for us with a true understanding to even let our imaginations dwell upon this.

We know from the word of God that it is withheld from the minds of men, even from their imaginations, the true realization of what it is in heaven, and what it will be to those who are privileged to be there.

But, this we know, that any knowledge of heaven, it is the revelation of the Spirit of God. It is revealed in his word, and it is revealed in the hearts of his people.

It is that which is made to be of such intense desire to them, that it affects, more than affects, it dominates their whole lives.

things. Now, if there is in our thoughts toward God this dominant factor, and how many of us come short of this, yes, we turn our minds often to God, but we believe he draws by his Spirit that our minds should be turned to him, but so often our minds are dwelling upon other things, not even profitable things at all times.

[26 : 14] There is, of course, the necessity to dwell upon the things of everyday life, but oh, how often in those times of opportunity to think upon the word of God, to turn our thoughts in prayer unto God, do we find that our hearts are elsewhere.

But when we are brought into this realization of what it will be to behold the face of God, and David, of course, was praying to the Lord as Jehovah, the triune God, he would not have been able to think upon him as John was able to in the revelation to see the Lamb, to see the Savior, the Redeemer, and to see sitting on the right hand of God, the one who had given himself his blood, his very life, for the salvation of his people, but we don't know how much of this had been revealed to David, but it was made to be very attractive to him, it was that which he felt to be worth all the trouble that he might go through upon the earth if it would bring him into such a place as this, that I will behold thy face, in one of the references that I looked in the margins,

I looked in at home on this, the word will was put into the more positive shall, I shall behold thy face, and it seemed to me to show what a measure of assurance that was given to David in this.

Was it given only to David? Was it only for David that there should be this measure of assurance? No. No. If we are able to look back upon the dealings of God with our spirits, the favor of God toward our souls, to know that that good work has been begun, and to realize that in Christ Jesus it should be brought to a completion, this will be the culmination of it.

It will be then we shall realize and know of the fulfillment of the word of God which he which hath begun will perform. It will be when we shall see his face.

[28 : 49] It is when we shall enter into that place where he is, and where he has brought us. I thought of reading, as I tried to think on that which would be suitable for our lesson, the 14th chapter of John, when the Lord said, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

This is his people's hope, this is their desire, to be in his presence, to see his face, but then to see it, behold it, we know that Moses could not look upon his glory, he was unable to, it was too high for him, Moses, privileged man that he was, he was covered with the hand of God in the cliff of the rock, and then he was able to see the glory that was passed, but that glory so entered into Moses, so entered into Moses, that as he went back down from the mount, perhaps not on this occasion, but on another occasion, when he had been in very close contact with his God, with the Lord, on the mount, other people were unable to look upon him, and that seemed to me to be just a little adding to or entering into this word that we have here, when I awake, with likeness, we shall have to look at the other part in a moment, but that glory which was of

God, so because Moses had been in that contact with God, the glory had reflected in the face of Moses, that the people who had not seen such glory, were unable to look upon Moses, and Moses' glory which was of God, was but a faint reflection of the glory of God, and so we see how this glory must be, and yet, when we are brought into that place where he is, and where we shall see him as he is, we find that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, there will be that likeness given, and we have it here, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness, and then the Lord Jesus, in that blessed and holy portion that we read together, he said that the glory which thou hast given me may be given them, those whom the Lord will bring by his blood, and by his own righteousness, into heaven, to be in his presence, they shall be glorified, whom he justified, them he also glorified, there will be that likeness of his glory imparted unto them,

I shall be, I will behold thy face, I will behold thy face, and when we are brought into such a place, we are able, then, to have this understanding of that word which says, whom he justified, them he also glorified, and now, beholding this face perhaps in a less glorious manner, we do need to think upon it, and we have to be very brief upon it, the exhortation of God to his people is seek ye my face, and the psalmist would tell us of this, when they said seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face Lord, will I seek, there is that seeking of his face, while we are upon the earth, it is desiring that measure of communion with him, and entering into that measure of communion, oh sometimes we know and feel of the nearness of God to us, we realize that the gracious and blessed invitation was not only to the psalmist, but it was to his people, that they should seek to be near to him, to draw near to him, although not able in vision, natural vision to look upon his face, yet by faith they are able, and can you not tell this to, not perhaps in the manner in which the people could as they looked upon

Moses, but it is apparent, and it's apparent from time to time that those who live in very close communion with God, oh it is seen in their lives, and often in their features, it is seen in their faces, something of the grace, and of the love of God, is manifest in them, we are able to see it, and you can think upon those that come from time to time, and minister to us here, some of our dear and older ministers, as they come, there is that realization that they are those who seek the Lord's face, and we believe they are those that live in communion with him, in closeness to him, in knowledge of his voice, in hearing his voice, and having their understandings opened, I will behold thy face, but then, the

[34 : 40] Selmist, he was able to go a little deeper into this, he said, in righteousness, in righteousness, now here was a man, who was conscious, of his unrighteousness, at this time, we are not given, not given quite the same understanding of his awareness, of his sinfulness, as we are in other of his Selms, but a man who knew of the plague of his heart, and yet, he was able to say, I will behold thy face in righteousness, not to look upon the righteousness of God, because that is without question, there can be no way of looking upon God, except in his holiness, a holy God can be beheld in no other manner but in his holiness, but the Selmist had that belief given to him, that there would be a righteousness of his, an imparted righteousness, which would enable him to look upon God, holiness, without which no man can see God, that holiness, righteousness, which is of

Christ Jesus, is the only means by which his people shall be able to behold his face, and yet, it is that which is promised to those who seek it, it is that which, by implication, was anticipated, expected, by David, David not looking upon the blood of Jesus Christ, because he lived in a different part of the world's age, but by faith he was looking to such a means, oh, we believe that David was given many prophetic glimpses of that which was to be, and his hope and his assurance were raised to this, that although he was a sinful man, yet, his sins would be blotted out, there would be a cleansing, whether or not at this time he had heard the voice of

Nathan the prophet saying to him, the Lord hath put away thy sin, we know not, but he had heard the Spirit of God, felt the assurance of the Spirit of God that there would be given to him that holiness which would enable him to look upon the face of God in heaven, I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and then do we think of it like this, is there that concern in our spirits that as we think upon the blessedness of beholding the face of God, beholding the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, that there should be given to us that assurance of the forgiveness of our sins.

Is this the reason why there is so often in our prayers and our petitions that phrase forgive us our sins, that plea for forgiveness, the consciousness of the need of it, is it just to, as it were, get rid of the sin?

Is it not for the end of the forgiveness? Oh, we need to feel the forgiveness, but we need to feel the forgiveness because of that which will be denied us if the forgiveness is not given.

[38 : 30] The forgiveness of sins, a great blessing in itself is but a means to an end, that we shall behold his face. There needs to be that holiness, that righteousness, imparted to us, imputed to us, before that such a privilege or blessing as beholding the face of God can be ours.

I shall, I will behold thy face in righteousness. Oh, what an assurance this is. What an anticipation. What a desire.

Oh, truly it is our desire and I know that the Lord will bring it closer than just a desire. But with this assurance as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, cleansed from every sin, made fit to be in the very presence of God and to look upon his face.

Then I shall be satisfied. I tried to put just a little word about this as we began it. I shall be satisfied. Here again we have an implication.

There was a dissatisfaction, an incompleteness in the spirit of the Selmist. He knew that there was yet much land to be possessed.

[39 : 54] There was yet much that he needed to enter into spiritually before that there would be that complete satisfaction. Yes, he had many privileges, many blessings of a natural sort.

those ways in which the Lord had used him and provided for him, called him and appointed him. Yes, he could look back upon all those and perhaps there were not many in the word of God who knew more of the appointment and the manner in which the Lord led him, even from the sheepfold to the throne.

and yet in this Salm we see that with all those things that David had been given or anticipated, yet he knew that there was a greater satisfaction than the things of this earth, even the appointed things, those things that God had appointed him to.

He had a greater anticipation than this, that he would be satisfied when he was able to enter into this heavenly state.

This would be his satisfaction. He would look back upon all the way in which he had gone in the earth. He would, if such an opportunity is given to us, and we know not how these things will be, but to use just a little imagination for a moment, if we were able to look back upon all our lives as we entered into heaven, and I think we shan't, because I'm sure that our eyes will be turned to behold thy face.

[41 : 45] I will behold thy face, and it will take all our attention. But if it was possible to look back and to dwell for a moment upon the time that we had spent upon the earth, then we should say, thou hast done all things well.

Perhaps that verse which we used in one of the tapes that we made, and the last line is, right is the pathway leading to this, might be the expression of our language.

We should look back upon it, and we should say, crown after cross, light after darkness, but we should have to say this, right is this pathway leading to this.

We look back upon it all, and we would be satisfied. We should be quite contented with the way in which we have been led through the earth, whether it's been away of difficulty, away with many dangers, away with pain, away with weakness.

When we get to this state, we should be satisfied. We should be satisfied. He hath done all things well. I should be satisfied.

[43 : 00] But the psalmist says, when I awake, when I awake, as if the time state, the living upon this earth, we are able only to faintly perceive, almost as if we were asleep, the things which are to do with God and with heaven.

and there needs to be an awakening. And there will be an awakening. There will be an awakening, a spiritual awakening, and we find some stirrings, even while we are in the time state.

We find those times and places when a little glimpse is given, a little nearness, a little hope, a little assurance, and just a little learning, a little revelation.

But when we come to this state of satisfaction, of awakesness, of awareness, full awareness, of the depth, of the love of God, of his glory in heaven, it will be as an awakening, just as much as an awakening as it is when we wake to see the sunrise, or when we awake to a realization spiritually of the love of God as we are called by his grace.

This is a time of awakening, but even these great awakenings, the natural one and the spiritual one, will be but faint as compared with the awakening of the people of God as they enter into heaven.

[44 : 48] We read and hear of those who seem to be given this awakening even moments or minutes before they entered into heaven, that others were able to see of the wonders that they anticipated that they were entering into.

And it does our spirits good. It encourages us and enables us as we look into our own hearts and our own souls to find that our hopes are raised and increased and that we are enabled by the spirit of God and by those revelations which we have seen to realize that when our awakening comes, oh there will be a satisfaction.

It will be such a satisfaction. We should be completely satisfied with the ways in which we have been led that have brought us into the very presence of God to behold his glory when I awake.

And then these last words which we have already thought about, but we must just think about them again, with thy likeness, with thy likeness. We read that the Lord Jesus came upon earth in the likeness of sinful flesh.

He became like us in the likeness of sinful flesh. But we see that this likeness, this form of the Son of God will be given to his people, not the likeness of sinful flesh as he was, but we should be like him.

[46 : 28] We find this elsewhere in the word of God, and it's almost too much for us to receive, to think that it shall be a change in us, to bring us to be like unto God.

We shall be cleansed from all sin, purified, glorified. What does it tell us in the Corinthians, who shall change our vile body, that it may be made like unto his glorious body.

And then we see this, with thy likeness. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.

Isn't there some satisfaction in the anticipation, some hope in your breast? There is in mine. Some hope that these words which have been before us, that they are not in vain, they are written for our encouragement, for our instruction, and they were written by the Spirit of God.

May the Spirit of God bless them to us each. Amen. Amen.