

The sermon “The Light That Keeps Us Together”
From Psalm 27:1, 4–9 | 1 Corinthians 1:10–18
Preached by Pastor Peter Blank
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“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?”

Those words sound confident—almost bold. And they are. Yet they are not spoken from a place of ease. Psalm 27 comes from a life that knows threat, danger, and uncertainty. Enemies are named. Fear is close at hand. The psalmist does not pretend otherwise. And that matters. Because many of us are carrying fear, too—sometimes quietly, sometimes heavily.

- We live in a moment when the news can feel relentless.
- We hear of people shot during immigration enforcement. Alex Pretti is the latest.
- We hear fear voiced by communities who wonder whether safety and justice still apply equally.
- We hear concerns about leaders who seem willing to stretch—or ignore—limits on their power.
- We hear about global uncertainty, economic instability, and fragile alliances following high-profile gatherings like the meetings in Davos.

Even if we don’t follow every detail, we feel the weight of it. We sense the tension. We notice how easily conversations turn sharp, how quickly trust erodes. And then we come to church. Not because we have it all figured out, but because we need light.

Psalm 27 does not rush past fear. It names it. And then it says, “The Lord is my light.”
Light does not deny darkness.
Light makes it possible to see.
Light keeps us from losing our footing when the ground feels unsteady.

The psalmist then speaks one of the most important lines in all of Scripture: “One thing I asked of the Lord... one thing I seek.”

One thing.
Not a long list.
Not a solution to every problem.
Not certainty about what tomorrow will bring.

One thing:

“To live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord.”

That is a prayer for nearness. When life feels complicated, faith often becomes very simple. We long to know that God is near. We long to know that we are not facing the world alone.

- Many of us reach a stage in life where illusions fall away.
- We know we cannot control everything.
- We know our strength is limited.
- We know plans change.

And still, God invites us to seek the one thing that endures: God's presence.

Faith is not about having answers ready when the news breaks.

Faith is about knowing where to turn when fear rises.

It is about orienting our lives toward the light.

The church in Corinth was facing its own kind of anxiety. Their struggle was not persecution or poverty. It was division. People were lining up behind different leaders. Different voices.

Different ways of understanding what mattered most. Paul writes to them with urgency and care.

"I appeal to you," he says, "that there be no divisions among you."

That can sound unrealistic. After all, people disagree. They always have.

Paul's concern runs deeper than disagreement. He sees a community losing its center. So he asks a simple question: "Has Christ been divided?" In other words, when fear pulls us apart, what are we clinging to? Where are we placing our trust?

The world offers many substitutes for security.

Power.

Certainty.

Strong leaders.

Clear sides.

Paul points the Corinthians somewhere else—back to the cross.

The cross is not impressive by the world's standards.

It does not look strong.

It does not promise control.

It reveals a God who chooses love over dominance.

A God who enters suffering rather than standing above it.

A God who meets us in vulnerability.

Paul calls this the wisdom of God.

At the cross, everyone stands on the same ground.

No one earns their place.

No one stands higher than another.

All receive grace.

That matters in times like these.

When fear is high, it is easy to retreat into camps.
It is easy to see others as problems rather than neighbors.
It is easy to forget what we share.
Christ's light works differently.
Light does not push people apart.
Light helps us see where we are standing—together.
Christ's light shows us our fear without shaming us for it.
It invites humility instead of rivalry.
It reminds us that our first loyalty is not to an opinion or a leader, but to Christ.
For a church like this one, that is good news.

This congregation has known many seasons.
Seasons of growth.
Seasons of loss.
Seasons of confidence and times of uncertainty.

What has held you together has never been perfection.
It has not been certainty about the future.
It has been presence.
 Christ's presence in worship.
 Christ's presence at hospital bedsides.
 Christ's presence in grief and in quiet faithfulness.

The same light that has guided this community through years of change is still here.
Psalm 27 moves toward a prayer spoken softly:
“Do not hide your face from me.”

That is not a demand.
It is a plea.
A deeply human one.

And Scripture answers it not with explanations,
not with guarantees,
but with presence.
God does not promise that the world will suddenly feel safe.
God promises not to abandon us in it.

So we keep seeking the one thing.
We keep turning toward the light.
We keep gathering, praying, listening, and trusting—sometimes with confidence, sometimes with trembling.

In a world that feels divided and unsettled,
the church does not exist to have all the answers.
The church exists to bear witness to the light.

The light that steadies us.
The light that humbles us.
The light that keeps us together.
And that light has not gone out.

It has brought us this far. It remains with us still. And it will carry us forward, one faithful step at a time. In places of worship, the grocery store, in our neighborhoods. And when we are alone. It will carry forward.
Amen.