

The One Thing

Text: Psalm 27

In the movie, *City Slickers*, Mitch Robbins (Billy Crystal) is 39 and miserable.

He is tired of his job and bored with his life.

And his two best friends, Ed & Phil, aren't doing much better.

So they decide to chase all their troubles away with a fantasy vacation.

They swap their briefcases for saddle bags and set out to find freedom and adventure herding cattle across the New Mexico countryside.

They suffer sore backsides and sunburn.

But they also discover is more insight into themselves and each other.

At one point in the story Mitch is riding through the bush with Curly (the rough and tough cowboy played by Jack Palance).

Mitch listens as Curly talks about his love of life as a cowboy...the joy and thrill of bringing the herd of cattle in after a long ride.

Mitch is mesmerised and says '*Wow, See now that's great...your life makes sense to you.*'

Curly responds, 'You city folk worry about to much s***.'

And adds 'None of you get it!'

'Do you know what the secret of life is?'

'No what?'

'This.' Curly slowly raises his index finger in a gnarly old leather glove.

Mitch responds '*Your finger?*'

'One thing...Just one thing.'

You stick to that one thing and everything else don't mean s*** (Nothing).'

Mitch, '*That's great, but what's that one thing?*'

Curly, 'That's what you've got to figure out.'

What a great question to ask yourself!

What is the ONE THING that makes living worth while?

Now we can give the Sunday School answer and say, "God's love or Jesus' sacrifice".

But what is your truthful answer?

Have you found that "ONE THING"?

What is the ONE THING?

All of us are seekers.

We all have goals; we all have dreams.

And we are all hopeful that one day those dreams may come true.

Maybe some of you are past dreaming...but you still have hopes.

What are the THINGS that you seek?
Are those THINGS worth looking for?
Why are you looking for those things?
Are they worthy of our efforts?

We live in a world where people are looking for the one thing that will make them truly happy.

They are consumed with finding purpose and meaning.
But what the world says will meet your needs are only substitutes for the real thing.

It is the real thing that you and I need to be looking for.
That should be our priority...today and every day.

In City Slickers they all found renewed hope in life...
In family and love lives.
They realised what was important to them.

But there is also more to life than meets the eye.

David was a man who knew the best of life, and the worst.
He tasted success and riches and power.
He also knew what it was like to struggle with the serious issues of life.
He had personal problems, he had people problems.

But David also knew what the most important thing to be looking for was.
And in Psalm 27 we read of his most important priority...
We read of the one thing that he wanted more than anything else.

Turn to Psalm 27:4

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. (NIV)

Psalm 27 is one of the best-known and comforting Psalms.
But it is hard to know whether it is chiefly a Psalm of confidence...
Written against a dark background of enemies.
Or a lament...where David cries out for help against these enemies.

Both these moods are clear in the Psalm.
Verse 1-6 exudes confidence.
Verse 7-14 is a very moving prayer.

Some commentators actually argue that it is two psalms awkwardly put together.
Yet there are strong links between the two halves.
The enemies David fears in part two are also present in part one...

But they melt into the background because of his confidence in God.
And his desire to dwell in God's house (4),
is balanced with a desire to seek God's face in part two (8).

So it is one psalm...neatly broken up into two stanzas (sections).

But the jewel in the Psalm is verse 4...
Which is worth spending time looking at together.

First, notice **The Discipline of worship.**
One thing I ask, this is what I seek.

To be a person who is a true worshipper of the Lord Jesus Christ requires a
commitment to personal discipline.

In a day and age when so many things compete for our worship and devotion,
believers are often forced to make choices.

We are bombarded with conflicting things to chase after...
People today say our first aim should be to get money, security, thrills, pleasure...
Education, good job, big house, lots of toys
anything but God.

David resisted the temptation to be consumed with his many duties in leading a
nation.

He chose instead to make God his number one priority.

David's request to dwell in the house of the Lord is accompanied by diligent seeking.

David had a single-minded pursuit, and he worked at it hard.

I'll go so far as to say that things began to fall apart for him when he let this
priority slip.

We live in an age of change...change jobs, new hobby, new car, latest fad, new
husband, new wife.

Scripture is very clear, however, that we are fools if we live our lives chasing new
things all the time.

The quest we ought to be involved in is seeking the ONE THING that is worth living
for and then be as devoted to it as we possibly can;
to seek the ONE Foundation that will remain.

This ONE THING is what David was committed to.

The Destination of Worship. "...That I may dwell in the house of the Lord."
David was speaking here of an ongoing and intimate relationship with God.

Worship is meant to bring us to the throne of God, through His Son,
that we might grow in our understanding of Him.

If worship doesn't do that, then one of two things has gone wrong:
Either we are worshipping the wrong thing
or we're worshipping for the wrong reason.

We might ask why David had such a single and obsessive longing for God's House,
particularly when the glorious temple of Solomon was not yet built.
At this point God's house was a tent, which contained the Ark of the Covenant.

The answer is that it was not the earthly temple itself that charmed David,
but rather the beauty of the Lord that was found in the temple in a special way.
David wanted to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.

While our Reformed heritage tells us that we worship the Lord in all aspects of our
lives.

That, as Jesus said, we are in the age where we worship God in spirit and in
truth.

There is something to be experienced of God in church that can't easily be captured
anywhere.

Otherwise, why have churches?

If it is only instruction we need...we can get that from a book or CD or DVD.

If it is only fellowship...

we can capture that in small groups, or even other organizations.

The Woronora Rural Fire Service was the fellowship outlet for many guys...

They lived and breathed for the times together.

There is something to be said about the singing of hymns, the sitting in pews, the
actual looking at the pulpit as the Word of God is expounded, the tasting of the
sacraments, and the very atmosphere of the place that is spiritually beneficial.

Isn't that true?

Haven't you found a sense of God's presence, just by coming into the church?

I don't deny that God can, and should, be experienced and worshipped in other
places.

But this time together with other believers should mark it as something special.

But what is our attitude to worship?

How do we come into church?

What is the motivation and object of your worship?

Do you come looking at your watch...wondering when it was going to end...

So you can get on with the more important things of the day.

Albert Einstein, who told us that time was relative, once said,
"Spending a minute sitting on a hot stove seems like an hour, while spending an hour
with a beautiful girl seems like a minute."

Look at the heart and attitude of David...he wanted to be with God!
What is your heart and attitude?

The Duration of Worship. "...all the days of my life."
David could think of nothing better than to spend the rest of his life dwelling in the
very presence of God.
Worship is not a momentary experience;
it is a life-long pursuit where we give all that we are to honour all that He is.

The Desire of Worship. "...to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek Him in
His temple." David had two desires in worship: To see something and to seek
something.

The first was **to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD.**
The Hebrew, "to behold the beauty of the Lord," is a saying expressing the absolute
delight which gazing continually at God's glory brings to us.
It is beyond words and must be experienced to be understood.

David understood the value of taking time to enjoy his relationship with God.
Too many Christians don't take time to smell the roses.
In other words, we are in such a hurry to get to where we are going,
that we don't take time to enjoy the trip.

What a waste it is when we reduce following the Lord to merely the fulfilling of
certain duties.
Following Jesus is more than attending church, doing church work, giving our
money, and doing good works in the name of Christ.

It should include all of those things.
But those things ought to be done because of the joy we feel as we enjoy our
relationship with Jesus Christ.
We do good works and fulfill our responsibilities because we love the Lord.

Unless we serve Christ out of this motivation, our service will soon become too
heavy a burden for our flesh to bear.

Take time to enjoy the glory of the Lord.
Consider His love for you.
Take time to think about how patient He is with you.
Look closely at His mercy.
Analyze His compassion and tender care.

We need to take time to enjoy Him, **to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD.**

I read a quote that said,
“If you want to be happy for a hour—take a nap.
If you want to be happy for a day—go fishing.
If you want to be happy for a month—get married.”

Happy for a month?
The beauty of a beautiful woman may captivate a man for a month, or maybe longer.
But the beauty of the Lord captivates forever.

How wonderful it is to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, to examine carefully, to reflect on Him—and be filled with happiness, satisfaction and delight.

David also tells us that he wanted to **seek God in His temple.**
The Hebrew word translated, 'seek' has connotations of **examining carefully, of scrutinizing, of looking and reflecting on what you see.** (KAB)

The idea is to actively and passionately pursue God so you might know Him better and enjoy Him more.

There is nothing sweeter than communion with Jesus Christ.
As you seek Him in prayer, through the reading of His Word,
and through your daily walk with Him by faith,
there comes a very real inner strength.
It is an inner assurance that He loves us and that He is there for us.

We come to understand the reality of His promise,
that He would never leave us or forsake us.
We come to know Him as our friend.

If there is one thing lacking in the lives of many believers,
it is this communion with Christ.
If you find you lack power in your life, or peace, or joy, then pause for a moment and consider your communion with Christ.
Do you desire to spend time in His presence?
Do you desire to come to know Him?
Do you take the time to enjoy fellowship with Jesus Christ
and to be in Him through prayer and through His Word?

Conclusion

David, a man after God's heart, understood what was important in his life.

Being Near God

Here he starts out by requesting ONE THING

The ONE THING that sums up his entire life

To live in the presence of God.

To see the beauty of God.

To know God.

David wanted to be in the presence of God.

He knew there he would find strength and spiritual stamina to face life.

It is only in God's presence that we find the strength to face the things of life.

Are you like David?

Is the ONE THING that means more to you, that makes life worth living,
your desire to be with God?

Is that the one thing you are focused on?

Finish with some words from Paul on the idea of pursuing ONE THING.

Paul was discussing where his confidence lay.

He found it was not in himself; the law; or the things the world can offer.

Here's what he found out:

(Phil 3:10-14)

10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But ONE THING I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Paul was pursuing ONE THING...the prize of being with God

What is the ONE THING that makes living worth while?