

KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH



Psalm 17:15

True Joy Comes from Knowing Christ

**And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake,
I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.**

At some point in your life, you have probably received a Christmas gift that just wasn't quite what you wanted. You were grateful for the thought and effort, but it wasn't your style or you weren't interested in the book or game. Maybe it was even a little disappointing.

In Psalm 17, David was disappointed. He was disappointed in the people around him. As he struggled to do what was God pleasing and right, they were actively persecuting him. He wasn't dealing with a misunderstanding, but people who were trying to track him down. He pictured them as lions trying to attack their prey — him!

It isn't difficult to identify with how David was feeling. Life is often disappointing. Is it people? Maybe unlike David, they are not actively persecuting you, but they disappoint you because they don't live up to your expectations. Or, maybe there are people who actively persecute you. Are you disappointed with an unfulfilling job? To make it worse, perhaps there aren't many other options. Is the situation of your life not what you imagined it would be? Too much sickness? Not enough money to pay the bills? Family stress and drama that is unnecessary?

Or perhaps the biggest disappointment any of us knows is ourselves! Paul's inspired words in Romans 7, "**I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing,**" are not just a casual observation about life. Paul's inability to do the good he wanted cuts into our hearts too. We try to mask our failures by blaming others or saying there was nothing else we could do in a situation. But in moments of honest reflection that are guided by God's Word, we have to admit that we just aren't the people

we'd like to be or pretend to be. The relationships that are weak or broken in my life are often that way because I was selfish or ignored someone. I mean to be loving; but I don't always do it. The pressure from a boss at work wouldn't be there if I was more faithful in carrying out the tasks I'm assigned to do. I mean to; but I don't. I'm the one who makes excuses for my failures and expects everyone to accept my failures. No one in the world has been given any more time than God has given me. I feel like I don't have enough time because I don't manage my own time very well. I mean to; but I don't.

If the real disappointments that I feel because the world and the people around me aren't bad enough, there is no way to escape the reality of me. I am a sinner whose sins have disappointing consequences in my life.

David found relief from the disappointments all around him. "**Show the wonder of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes**" (v. 7). And later in the Psalm, "**O Lord, by your hand save me from such men, from men of this world whose reward is in this life**" (v. 14).

But greatest relief is expressed in our text, "**And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.**" The queen of Sheba got a sliver of a glimpse at this satisfaction. She commented that the officials who served Solomon must have always been happy for they heard his wisdom. Solomon was just using gifts given to him by God. Simeon got an even greater look at the satisfaction David expressed. Standing in the Temple courts, he held the infant Messiah in his arms and realized that the promises of the Old Testament were being fulfilled in his sight.

You see it in an even clearer way than the queen of Sheba or Simeon who held Jesus. You know from Scripture the full work of Jesus Christ. You know the compassion of the One who walked this earth and stopped to help any and all who needed him. There are no stories of Jesus turning people away. Only acts of mercy and time for important teachings. That is your Jesus. You know the love of the One who was willing to be punished for our lifetime of failures and unfulfilled plans. His death was the punishment that we deserved from God. Now that punishment is gone! And so is our sin! You know the power of the One who rose from the dead and crushed not only death's attempt to hold him, but death's grip on anyone.

Satisfaction comes from seeing his face as we trust in him as our Savior. Our guilty disappointments are washed away.

Then the assurance of this forgiveness impacts the other disappointments in our lives. The fact that God loves us — always and in everything — changes the way we view all the disappointments we face in life. The difficult job or difficult people are opportunities for us to put our faith into practice and show the love of Christ that is now in us. God cannot be letting these troubles happen because he is punishing us for our sins. And so somehow and in some way, God will use our troubles according to his love. He will bless us in the midst of our trials.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of our trials and disappointments in life is that they are a constant reminder of the truth that David is also expressing in our text. One day we will open our eyes and see God — not by faith, but we will see him in his glory in heaven. Jesus' victory over sin

and death means that heaven is in our future. This world of disappointments seems like the best there is because it is all we know. There is more; there is better. God doesn't want you to exist in this world forever; he wants you to live with him in heaven one day.

What satisfaction there will be when we see Jesus in heaven! What perfect joy will fill our hearts!

Here on earth we get a taste of it. We taste the joy of knowing Jesus as we hear his Word, for there he is, speaking to us. We receive just a sliver of the joy that awaits us as we receive the Lord's Supper and receive the Lord Jesus and his perfect forgiveness. His presence in our lives brings joy to our hearts.

This month, I don't have any open weekends. That's not a complaint; I enjoy the numerous fellowship events that happen this time of year. In my free time, I need to buy some presents and finish putting up the Christmas decorations. Again, I enjoy doing it. But if we aren't careful, the many things that appear on our to-do lists can rob us of the joy of celebrating Christ's birth.

David said, **I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.** That's what we really need. That doesn't mean we don't do the other things we have to do this month, but don't let anything rob you of the joy of seeing his face. By faith we glimpse at Jesus to fill darkening days with holy light. In heaven we will see in him in his glory. Jesus' gracious presence in your life is your reason for joy. Amen.

Midweek Advent
December 3, 2014 

