

Ben Veatch

Sermon

My name is Ben Veatch. I am 17 years old. I am a senior at Carmel High School. My parents are Craig and Karin Veatch. I have a younger brother Evan who is a sophomore at Carmel. I have attended Pilgrim since I was about 3 years old. I was baptized here and confirmed here. After graduation, I will attend Indiana University. My plan is to study something in the Health field, such as exercise science, and then perhaps go to medical school. I also received an athletic scholarship. I will run cross country and track at IU.

Today I want to discuss Psalm 27, specifically verse 1. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Now, before the past couple of weeks I had never read this part of the bible or I don't remember reading it, but immediately I could connect it to my life. If you know me, you know I am very into running. It is one of the biggest parts of my life. When I have a race I go through a ritual. During my stride outs prior to the race I take one stride out longer than the rest. I go way out past anyone to where I am alone in the middle of the course, crouch down, and say the same prayer every time. "Dear God, please protect me as I run in today's race. Give me the strength to push past the pain and fight for every second. Please protect everyone from injury and harm and let everyone compete to the best of their ability." While writing this I asked myself the question why do I say it? Why do I say this prayer to myself? And I realize that I am a little scared every time. Scared of letting my teammates down. Scared of letting down myself. I ask God to give me strength, to lead me along the path he has laid out for me. And as I rise up out of my prayer I have that unwavering confidence that God will deliver. And with him as my light, whom shall I fear? I go back to the line fearless. Knowing God is with me for every step. But that is just my personal connection.

It is my hope that each person can have a relationship with God that makes him or her less afraid. The world is a very scary place. Just in the past two decades the world has seen the terrorist attacks of 9-11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the turmoil in the Gaza strip, the millions of people living in poverty as a result of natural disasters, the recent terror attacks in Paris. The world is not short on fear. Even in our daily lives we fear debt, local crime, death, hurting our loved ones, homework. It's a little scary to think about what Pilgrim will be like after Pastor Al retires. The list can go on. But what we fear is the unknown. We have a knowledge of the past and fear what is to come. The next terror attack, the next economic collapse, the next natural disaster. But God has a plan for us. He is our light in dark times. He will lead us, guide us, and give us a kick in the right direction when necessary. We should have unwavering confidence in him. Believe that whatever happens in our life, it is all because he has something great planned for us.

5 days ago on Tuesday, February 16, one of my good friends and teammates Matt Cooper was diagnosed with Leukemia. It shocked our whole community at Carmel. Just the day before on Monday I was lifting weights with him and everything seemed normal. He is currently at IU medical hospital and has a long tough road ahead of him. Matt is one of the toughest guys I know but something like this is scary to anyone. I know I would be scared. It is situations like these where we need our unwavering confidence in the Lord. That even through these tough times, God will protect Matt and carry him through to greater times. I have unwavering confidence that Matt will pull through. With his determination, our support and the protection of God, I know this will not be a sad ending. It might be a rough patch in Matt's life, but it by no means will hinder his ultimate life goals.

In conclusion, I am thankful for Pilgrim and the relationships I have made here, and new ones I will make here. I am thankful for my relationship with God, and I know he is with me in happy times, in sad times and in scary times. May the peace that passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.

