

Sermon for March 15th, 2026
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

READINGS

Isaiah 49:8-13

8 This is what the LORD says:

“In the time of my favor I will answer you,
and in the day of salvation I will help you;
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people,
to restore the land
and to reassign its desolate inheritances,
9 to say to the captives, ‘Come out,’
and to those in darkness, ‘Be free!’

“They will feed beside the roads
and find pasture on every barren hill.

10 They will neither hunger nor thirst,
nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them.
He who has compassion on them will guide them
and lead them beside springs of water.

11 I will turn all my mountains into roads,
and my highways will be raised up.

12 See, they will come from afar—
some from the north, some from the west,
some from the region of Aswan.”

13 Shout for joy, you heavens;
rejoice, you earth;
burst into song, you mountains!

For the LORD comforts his people
and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

Psalm 132:10-18

[Collect verses in **bold**]

10 For the sake of your servant David,
do not turn away the face of your anointed one.

11 The LORD swore to David a sure oath
from which he will not turn back:
“One of the sons of your body
I will set on your throne.

12 If your sons keep my covenant
and my testimonies that I shall teach them,
their sons also forever
shall sit on your throne.”

13 For the LORD has chosen Zion;
he has desired it for his dwelling place:
14 “This is my resting place forever;
here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
**15 I will abundantly bless her provisions;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.**
**16 Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
and her saints will shout for joy.**
17 There I will make a horn to sprout for David;
I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.
18 His enemies I will clothe with shame,
but on him his crown will shine.”

Acts 2:41-47

41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. **42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **43** And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. **44** And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

John 6:1-15

1 After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. **2** And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. **3** Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. **4** Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. **5** Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” **6** He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. **7** Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” **8** One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, **9** “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” **10** Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. **11** Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. **12** And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” **13** So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. **14** When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”
15 Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Our meditation this Fourth Sunday in Lent is on our Psalm reading.¹

¹ Note to all Lay Leaders, Deacons and Chaplains. On account of a number of our Catacomb Synod congregations doing Wednesday night services (and me providing audio messages for them), the Lenten sermons will be focused on the Psalms and shorter than usual. If that does not suit your congregation, I recommend utilizing the previous year's Lenten homilies of the Lenten devotional homily from this past Wednesday.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Introduction

Psalm 132 is one of the Songs of Ascent, a Psalm that pilgrims would sing while traveling to Jerusalem as they were preparing to present themselves to the Lord, celebrate the Passover, or offer up sacrifices at the Temple. If we wish to grasp its fullness of meaning and its beauty, our reading for today must be approached with the perspective we have as Christians with their full Bibles. If we read it in isolation, all by itself, then we have a promise to David regarding a dynasty and a promise about Jerusalem being a nice place to live – and that's it. Such a reading would suggest to us that David received some good promises, felt good about them, and then wrote about it in celebration so others could read it on their journey to his capitol city. That would make this reading something of... well, lesser value to us compared to other parts of Scripture.

But when we look at how things played out with a bit of *hindsight*, we have a greater appreciation for what God actually said to King David, and how it reveals His merciful, patient, and faithful character. It shows us His faithfulness despite the sins of men, how His Word endures throughout all generations, leading to our salvation in Christ Jesus. When we see it with the *long* term perspective, it becomes invaluable to us.

The Psalm's First Message

King David prays, beseeching our Lord to shine His Face upon the Anointed One. Previously, the king received a promise from God that said,

When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.”²

David understands this single offspring to be the true Anointed One, the Christ, who will be the Savior promised of old. And so, in the eleventh verse of our Psalm reading, he refers back to that oath from God: “The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: ‘One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.’” *That* son of David we know to be Jesus, and this promise was never broken. Christ indeed according to His humanity hails from the line of David, and He is the promised One to sit upon the Throne forever.

But as for the rest of David's descendants, they are not given an unconditional oath from our Lord. Instead, our Heavenly Father gives them a *conditional* promise. “*IF* your sons keep My covenant,” He says, *THEN* “their sons also forever shall sit on your throne.” Do you see the disconnect there my friends? There can only be one son of David on the throne at a time, and the “forever” seat is reserved for Jesus. The others then are saddled with this Psalm predicting that ultimately there will be a disconnect because of disobedience. And indeed, this happened – but God was faithful to His oath.

The Kings of Judah (and the rest of us)³

God was faithful to the promise of the Messiah arriving through the Davidic lineage, despite the absolute scandal of that family's history. He kept His Word even when David disobeyed the Law,

² 1 Chronicles 17:11-14

³ For those curious, here is a handy chart regarding the kings of Israel and Judah:

<https://www.providenceacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Chart-of-the-Kings-of-Israel-and-Judah.pdf>

committed adultery and murder. God was faithful to that promise even when Solomon began building temples to false gods for his foreign wives. He was faithful when Rehoboam and his son Abijam did evil after the kingdom split in two. He was faithful to prosper Asa and Jehoshaphat who followed His ways. He kept His promise about the future Messiah even when Jehoram and Ahaziah and Athaliah all reigned and did evil in His sight. He did not betray His Word even when Joash and Amaziah turned away from following Him. He blessed Uzziah and Jotham and kept them going even though He knew that Ahaz would be wicked after them. He blessed Hezekiah's reign and preserved his family even though Manasseh and Amon who came after him bathed the land in blood and idols. Though Josiah the next king died in battle, God blessed his soul and granted him a continued lineage despite the next four kings – Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin and Zedekiah – were all failures whose evil led to Babylon taking Judah into Exile.

Out of the twenty one kings of the Davidic dynasty, only seven were truly faithful to God. As He says in our Psalm reading, each one of these monarchs – except Athaliah, who was a foreigner – was under the same conditional promise. “If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne.” Over time their failures racked up, and so after Zedekiah no son of David sat on the throne until Christ arrived. God saw this single family, one burdened with an abysmal track record of sinfulness and abuse of power, said “I shall keep My promise to David.” Our Heavenly Father saw Manasseh offer up sacrifices to the false god baal, but kept His Word concerning Christ. He witnessed Zedekiah throwing the prophets in mud pits and still maintained His oath to David.

This same patience is shown to us our entire lives. The Davidic dynasty failed to maintain the conditional agreement God gave them, yet He still brought Christ through their line just as He promised. So too do we fail God *every day*, yet His Word to us stays strong. If no matter how badly one of those fallen kings sinned we still call Jesus the son of David, then how much more so will our Lord forgive those who love Him, trust in Him, and seek to please Him with their lives? May I remind you that God says He is no respecter of persons, He shows no partiality.⁴ If your faith is in Christ, then you are *just* as important to God and *just* as beloved by Him as David or Hezekiah or Josiah.

Conclusion: an Enduring Jerusalem

And if God sees you with the same love, patience, mercy, and steadfast faithfulness, then you are among His universal priesthood.⁵ And what does He promise to that priesthood in this Psalm? Being clothed with salvation, shouting for joy, being with God who dwells in the new Jerusalem forever. An eternal happiness which shall never be undone, for we shall behold Christ wearing His many crowns, and He shall be elevated far above all. Whenever you doubt yourself, and whenever your sins are brought to the forefront of your mind, remember these promises bestowed on every believer; for the very same God who was faithful to His promise given to David shall be faithful to *you* no matter how heavily your sins try to weigh you down.

Now the Peace of our Lord, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

4 Acts 10:34

5 1 Peter 2:9