

Sermon for August 2nd, 2026
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

READINGS

2 Samuel 22:21-34

- 21** “The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me.
22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD
and have not wickedly departed from my God.
23 For all his rules were before me,
and from his statutes I did not turn aside.
24 I was blameless before him,
and I kept myself from guilt.
25 And the LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness in his sight.
26 “With the merciful you show yourself merciful;
with the blameless man you show yourself blameless;
27 with the purified you deal purely,
and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous.
28 You save a humble people,
but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down.
29 For you are my lamp, O LORD,
and my God lightens my darkness.
30 For by you I can run against a troop,
and by my God I can leap over a wall.
31 This God—his way is perfect;
the word of the LORD proves true;
he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.
32 “For who is God, but the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our God?
33 This God is my strong refuge
and has made my way blameless.
34 He made my feet like the feet of a deer
and set me secure on the heights.

Psalm 51:1-12

- 1** Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
9 Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
11 Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3** and all ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. **5** Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.
6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. **7** Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." **8** We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. **9** We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, **10** nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. **11** Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. **12** Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. **13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Luke 16:1-9

1 He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. **2** And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' **3** And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. **4** I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.' **5** So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' **6** He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' **7** Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' **8** The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. **9** And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."

Our text for meditation this Ninth Sunday after Trinity is on our Old Testament reading.

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

Introduction

After the wars of David were finished, toward the end of his life he composed this song. The children of Israel finally had secure borders, a functioning economy, their enemies brought to heel and paganism extinguished from the land. This was the first time the Israelites had peace, a righteous peace, in close to *four hundred years*. After such a long period of exhausting, bloody struggle, the Israelites finally reached the goal of being a prosperous, faithful nation.

Royal Swan Songs

So David writes the song in 2 Samuel 22, wherein we have our reading. Now, in his day this was common practice. As a king was in his old age, he would often write a *swan song*, or final public address to the people. Often times this would be a set of annals that he wrote, or a poem reflecting on his accomplishments. These were often stilted, bragging, and arrogant texts that reflected what they wanted people to think about them. Let's read from a few of the *other* swan songs from the pagan kings of the era.

From Sennacherib, a king of Assyria:

*Sennacherib, the great king,
the mighty king,
king of the world,
king of Assyria,
king of the four quarters,
the wise shepherd,
favorite of the great gods,
guardian of right,
lover of justice,
who lends support,
who comes to the aid of the destitute,
who performs pious acts,
perfect hero,
mighty man,
first among all princes,
the powerful one who consumes ⁹the insubmissive,
who strikes the wicked with the thunderbolt.¹*

From Mesha, a king of Moab:

And I built Baal-Meon, and I built a water reservoir in it. And I built Qiryaten. And the men of Gad lived in the land of Atarot from ancient times; and the king of Israel built Atarot for himself, and I fought against the city and captured it. And I killed all the people of the city as a sacrifice for Kemosh and for Moab. And I brought back the fire-hearth of his uncle from there; and I brought it before the face of Kemosh in Qerioit, and I made the men of Sharon live there, as well as the men of Maharit.

And Kemosh said to me, "Go, take Nebo from Israel." And I went in the night and fought against it from daybreak until midday, and I took it and I killed the whole population: seven thousand male

¹ The rest of his annals are just a list of military accomplishments:
<https://www.kchanson.com/ANCDPCS/meso/sennprism1.html>

*subjects and aliens, and female subjects, aliens, and servant girls. For I had put it to the ban for Ashtar Kemosh. And from there I took [the Lord's] vessels, and I presented them before Kemosh's face.*²

Finally, from Kilamuwa, a king of Gabbari:

"I am Kilamuwa, the son of King Chaya.

King Gabar reigned over Ya'diya but achieved nothing.

*Then came Bamah, and he achieved nothing. Then there was my father Chaya, but he accomplished nothing. Then there was my brother Sha'il, but he also accomplished nothing. But I Kilamuwa, the son of TML, what I accomplished not (even) their predecessors accomplished. My father's house was in the midst of powerful kings, and each put forth his hand to eat it; but I was in the hand(s) of the kings like a fire that consumes the beard or like a fire that consumes the hand. The king of the Danunians overpowered me, but I hired against him the king of Assyria. He gave me a maid for the price of a sheep, and a man for the price of a garment.*³

Do you see the difference?

Unlike those kings' writings, David's song is *not* written to brag about the state of Israel after his wars and state reforms. No my friends, that sort of arrogance is for *other* kings, *pagan* kings. Those unbelieving men wrote as though their earthly lives were the best they could do, the highlight of their eternities. They write as though they were trying to *earn* something from their ugly false gods. Meanwhile, David writes as a man who is justified by faith before God, and so he spends almost the entirety of his swan song praising the Lord. Ever the poet, he meticulously crafts every stanza of our reading to a fervent praise to God. Let us read through it once more.

i.

21 "The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me.

22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD
and have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For all his rules were before me,
and from his statutes I did not turn aside.

24 I was blameless before him,
and I kept myself from guilt.

25 And the LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness in his sight.

At first, David sounds like he is making the same arrogant claims that the pagan kings are making. But then he explains how God deserves all the credit: the righteousness being rewarded is not *inherent* to David. It is not his righteousness, but the Lord's righteousness imputed to him by faith.

ii.

26 "With the merciful you show yourself merciful;
with the blameless man you show yourself blameless;

27 with the purified you deal purely,
and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous.

28 You save a humble people,
but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down.

The king speaks as one who is justified before God on account of our Lord's graciousness. Why are David's hands clean? Because God, being merciful, cleansed him of his sins and rendered him blameless. How can David say that he has kept our Lord's ways? Because God purified him from his

2 The rest is Mesha's exploits with some mentions of his false god chemosh:
<https://www.kchanson.com/ANCDPCS/westsem/mesha.html>

3 More of his inane bitter ramblings may be found here:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilamuwa_Stela

former iniquities. How does he receive reward from God? Because our Lord heard his humility, and instead of counting his sins against him God counted his good deeds in his favor.

iii.

29 For you are my lamp, O LORD,
and my God lightens my darkness.
30 For by you I can run against a troop,
and by my God I can leap over a wall.

While the other near eastern kings spoke of their exploits and their greatness as a way of “earning” favor from their idols, David points to our Lord as the one who made everything good happen. Because God enlightens, enables, and empowers David to do everything he accomplishes, God deserves all the praise. The same way David could not have defeated Goliath without the Holy Spirit's work, neither could he have written so many of the Psalms, or even this final song.

iv.

31 This God—his way is perfect;
the word of the LORD proves true;
he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.
32 “For who is God, but the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our God?
33 This God is my strong refuge
and has made my way blameless.
34 He made my feet like the feet of a deer
and set me secure on the heights.

Though the song goes on further, it is nonetheless best captured with these verses. Who is Israel to praise for their newfound security? The king? No, for he could do nothing without help. Ah, but God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, *He* is the one whose Word proves true at all times, and *His* protection is worth far more than many armies. This God made David's way blameless, and brought him to the heights of salvation.

My friends, why would David proclaim this song throughout all Israel as he did? Because all these things our Lord did for him, our Lord can do for anyone – including, even especially, yourself. David was not just a king, he was also a *prophet*, and as a prophet he speaks on behalf of God to all people. Seeing the Gospel from afar in time, he knew that the Lord would make people blameless by the suffering Messiah who would rise again.⁴ The Holy Spirit inspired him, showing that the safety and prosperity of Israel foreshadows the paradise that shall belong to all Christians after the Resurrection. David writes with a view of Divine grace showered on all believers, and speaks of his own experiences as proof so that we can trust God even further.

Conclusion

The author of First and Second Chronicles is constantly comparing all the kings of Judah to their forefather David. The reason for that is not that he was the greatest king or anything like that, but rather moments like this. Given rest from all his enemies, David points us to God, to faith in Him and entrusting ourselves to His care and empowerment. He was different from the other kings, certainly, but the difference is found in his swan song, wherein he exhorted all Israel – and us – to expect from our Lord in faith all the things He did for David.

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

4 This is especially evident in Psalm 22.