1 Kings 17:8-16

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[0:00] A Song of Ascents Remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.

I will not enter my house or get into my bed. I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.
Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah. We found it in the fields of Ya'ar. Let us go to his dwelling place. Let us worship at his footstool.
Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness and let your saints shout for joy.
For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one. 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.
[1:29] If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne. For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for his dwelling place.

This is my resting place forever. Here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions. I will satisfy her poor with bread.
Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. There I will make a horn to sprout for David. I have prepared a lamb for my anointed.
His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine. This is the word of the Lord.
You may be seated. Four of the fifteen songs of ascents are attributed to David by way of title.
You can notice them in Psalms 122, 124, 131, and 133. That said, a fifth psalm in this collection of fifteen songs obviously takes David as its subject.
[3:06] And that is the psalm before us today, Psalm 132. The figure of David, while not listed in the line of attribution, is nevertheless stretching across each of the four segments of Hebrew poetry.

Take a look. You come across David's silhouette for the first time in verse 1. Remember, O Lord, in David's favor.
He's still present by the time you come to the terrain of the writer at verse 10. For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one.
You'll find him standing tall for the third time in the third section of poetry, verse 11. The Lord swore to David a sure oath.
And the outline of David can still be made out as the songwriter prepares to conclude in verse 17.
[4:16] There I will make a horn to sprout for David. I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. King David, the writer of four songs of the ascents, but the undeniable subject of the fifth.

As I look at the psalm, it divides easily into two overarching segments. David's driving passion for life is the subject of verses 1-10.
David's passion. This is, in a sense, everything that is dear to him, and it concerns what he swore in verse 2.
His passion gave birth to his oath. David's passion, 1-10. And following on the heels of David's passion is God's promise.
Look, verse 11. And the Lord swore to David. It doesn't get any simpler than that. You might be five years old here, or 85.
[5:25] Psalm 132, although it's 18 verses in length, can be known by all. David's passion. God's promise.

So I begin by asking, what was the driving passion behind the life of David? And what will that mean for us?

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David lived a full life. Much of it we know through the record found in 1 Samuel and also given to us by the chronicler in 1 Chronicles.
We know much of the narrative of his life. Singling out one driving passion, though, might be difficult. Certainly, he possessed a heart after God's own heart.
I mean, that is for many the summary of his passion. That his heart was after God's own heart.
Today, I want to not challenge that, but I want to probe it.
[6:26] I want you to think about coming up with something more concrete, more tangible than that which you have given voice to in the past. I want you to think about what is external, almost emblematic.

Something that you could point to in his life and say, there, that thing. That's the thing that drove him. That's the thing that preoccupied him over the course of the years of his life.
I want you to be able to go out of here today and know what got him up in the morning. What kept him going long after the lights went out in the evening. Some might point to a simple desire to be faithful.
After all, much of the material we have about David narrates him as one who wanted to have a legacy of simply being a humble, hardworking, faithful man.
I mean, that's the way he's presented early when we first find him as a young boy working out in the fields for his father. Just faithfully going about what he's been asked to do.
[7:34] That's the way we see him during his running years when he is patiently hiding himself away, never lifting a finger for his own advancement, even after being anointed by Samuel to succeed Saul as the ruler of God's people.

He would never exalt himself until God's time was right. We might point to his desire to be faithfulness. Faithful to do well in whatever task God gave him and faithful to remain humble in whatever circumstances God put him.
Some say the driving passion of his life might be a simple desire to be faithful. Others might point to, well, no, when one gets under the skin of David, he was ruled by a passion to be fruitful.
And this true is also put forward in the scriptures. He's ever the productive one. These are some of the favorite portions of the Davidic narrative to me.
He is the aggressive one. He is always ready to reach out and expand the territory of the Lord. He is one who is never afraid of a fight.
[8:55] David's passion, some might say, is wrapped up in his need for achievement, godly achievement at that. In other words, well-directed passion to achieve things, to get stuff done, to accomplish, to create opportunity for growth.

And indeed, the idea of fruitfulness extends beyond David on the battlefield or in the boardroom.
The supreme act of David's fruitfulness in life is that he gave himself to the life of the mind.
In some respects, we have to understand David by knowing that he studied language, that he made himself aware of the nuances of Hebrew poetry, line, measure, parallelism.
He worked his craft. He drafted and drafted and drafted. And then in these areas, went under the power of the Holy Spirit.
Perhaps he did it in a one-time sit-down. We do not know. But even perhaps in his collection of hymns, he drafted them under the guidance of the Spirit.
[10:11] So as a result, he's an accomplished lyricist. He's a songwriter. He's a poet. Further, he was an instrumentalist. And evidently, he was of such skill that he was asked to play in the presence of kings.

Indeed, he's rightly called in the Bible, I love this phrase of him, the sweet psalmist of Israel. He was fruitful. The body of his work is with us still.
So what was the driving passion behind his life? Was it to be faithful, humble, hardworking? Was it to be fruitful, achieving and accomplishing things for God?
Was it both? Was it something else altogether? Another, this week, I want to offer an overlooked aspect of his life that I think gets to the core of his passion.
Psalm 132 reveals it. Before we look at it, I want to back up one step. I want to ask you, I want to tell you that if you want to find out what drives a person, you have to look on the inside, not the outside.
[11:24] You have to become familiar with the interior makeup of a man or woman's soul to grab hold of what drives them on the outside.

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In other words, driving passion arises from internal preoccupation. The things that drive your external commitments in life are the things that preoccupy yourself internally.
Internal preoccupation gives birth to one's passion. What gets you up in the morning and that which keeps you going long after the lights go out in the evening is your ultimate passion.
What your mind is never quite clear of, that is in its ultimate end, that's your passion. Verse 1, I think, sets us on a course of discovering David's passion.
For it's here we find what preoccupied his mind, I believe, all the days of his adult life. The key term is the one translated hardships.
[12:34] Remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured. Now, I don't know how you read that verse initially. When I read it initially, I began to think of it in terms of David and his relationship to all the external things he had to endure at the hands of his enemies, at the hands of Saul, at the hands of his family.

All the hardships. Yet two observations have led me to point you in a different direction, away from external things that he endured, to an internal preoccupation of his own soul.
First is, in the Hebrew, the verbal form here for hardships is rare, and it's passive, and at times it is reflexive. In other words, hardships might be signifying the afflictions brought on by his own soul, rather than the hardships endured at the hands of others.
So he might be saying, remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, all the hardships that arose from within him concerning, and this is second, the context in which this word is used, the very next verse connects these hardships to David and him to an oath concerning a dwelling place for the Ark of the Covenant.
O Lord, all the hardships he endured, in which or through whom he swore to you and vowed to you, look at verse 3 through 5, I will not enter my house or get into my bed.
[14:04] I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob. I believe that this is the driving passion of his adult life.

It wasn't merely to be personally faithful, for everyone needs to be faithful. It wasn't merely to be fruitful, as exalted as his fruit-bearing years were.
The ultimate core of David, and that which defines why he had a heart after God's own heart, the agony of his soul, the driving passion of his life, was for God's fame to be known in the world.
He wanted God to have place. It kept him up at night.
God is without place. God's name is without presence.
[15:21] God's creation, yet does not know its maker. God's people are not intimately acquainted with him.

The word hardships is the word afflictions. It afflicted his soul. In the belly of the man was a passion. For the fame of his Lord. That's why the ark, and finding a place of the ark, is the gravitational emblematic center of the psalm.
Let me just give you a quick history of David's activity with the ark. Because we don't talk about it very often. We talk about all his other exploits.
And I think we've missed what got him up every day. He first made an oath to Nathan in 2 Samuel 7, verse 2, that he wanted to build God a house.
[16:39] And then was told by Nathan, God's going to build your house. And his king will come through you. Oh, David, your desire to make me famous in the world, to give me a house.

I love that heart. A heart that reaches out for the exaltation of my name in the world. I will do it through you.
Your house will carry my name. And upon that, he promised to build God a house. His first encounter with the ark came years before, when he heard that it had been found in the woods.
I love the way Drayton pronounced it here in verse 6. I won't try it. He's the Hebrew scholar in the Oriental Institute.
I am not. Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah. We found it in the fields of Jar. This hearkens the reader back to where the ark made its reappearance in the land of Israel.
[17:41] That they knew it existed and that the presence of God was there and that it needed to be reclaimed. That moved David. He brought it home with him.

And he brought it amidst what? Many hardships. Many afflictions. The death of two who accidentally touch it.

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The name of God in the world requiring this kind of care. After a series of years, he was the one, not Solomon, who first brought it up into the city.
Dancing. Praising God that his name had come to rest, that his presence was here. David was the one who consecrated the site of the future temple.
David was the one who procured most of the materials that Solomon would later use to build the temple. This is what got him up in the morning.
[18:49] Under his reign and rule. What can I do to secure the house and the name of the Lord in the world? David was the one who handed the blueprints over to his son.

David was the one who gave him these words, even in verses 8 to 10. Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place. You and the ark of your might. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness. Let your saints out for joy.
For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one, so that in years to come, when Solomon dedicated the temple, when the house was finally built, when God's name was in the world, Solomon grabs the intertextuality of this language, and the chronicler throws it into the mouth of him in his dedication prayer.
These very words. The name of God finally at rest. All from David. I want to argue that the ark of the covenant was the major concern of David, even to the end of his days.
Take a look at 1 Chronicles 22. Page 351. It's David who's preparing for the temple to be built.
[20:17] It's David, verse 3, who's providing great quantities of iron for nails, for the doors of the gates and for clamps. Cedar timbers without number. It's David who said in verse 5, Solomon, my son, is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent of fame and glory throughout all the lands.

I therefore will make preparations for it. He gave his life to the preparation for God's name in the world. And therefore he provided materials in great quantities before his death.
It's David, verse 6, who begins to charge Solomon concerning the building of the temple. Verse 11, Now, my son, the Lord be with you so that you may succeed.
And his plea that his son, after making a name for the Lord, would live under the word of the Lord in all ways. Look at verse 14.
David's words, With great pains I have provided for the house of the Lord a hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver and bronze and iron beyond weighing, for there is so much of it.
[21:28] Timber and stone too I have provided. To these you must add. You have an abundance of workmen, stone cutters, masons, carpenters, of all kinds of craftsmen without numbers, skilled in working gold, silver, bronze, and iron.

This great word to Solomon, Arise and work! The Lord be with you. Is not the Lord with you? Verse 19, Now set your mind and your heart to seek the Lord your God.
Arise and build the sanctuary of the Lord God. Why? So that the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God may be brought into the house built.
Why? For the name of the Lord. This is His consuming passion. You and I wake up in the morning and wonder what it is we're supposed to do, what it is we're supposed to write, how it is we're supposed to work, what dreams we might have, how we might be faithful, humble, hardworking, accomplished, achieving.
And David went to bed and rose up every morning wondering how can I make God's name and fame go throughout the world for all things.
[22:40] Are to be done for His glory. His achievement. The foundation stones that we lay. We need to cut our names out of them and put His in.

This was the affliction of His soul. He made preparation then for the day in which He would not live. He gave His life for the fame of the Lord after He would die.
My! How encouraging is this? How recalibrating is this for you and for me?
1 Chronicles 22, verse 14, the very word there, the noun, with great pains, is the same Hebrew root as the word in our text, all the afflictions He endured.
The ark is the external manifestation of His internal desire to see that God's name would be elevated in the world long after He leaves the scene.
[24:05] He gave His life to the generations that would follow and to the anointed one, the Messiah, that would be elevated beyond Him. That term even appearing twice in Psalm 132 in

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connection to David, but not identified with David, the anointed one, the Messiah, the Christ.

This is what He was on about. It makes me think of those who built Notre Dame in Paris long before they had the term architects.
The master mason commenced the work in 1163. The towers were not completed until 1245. The cathedral was not done until 1345.
Nearly 200 years of blueprints being handed down from Master Mason to Master Mason, from generation to generation, that Our Lady Notre Dame would rise and that her name would be great.
And David goes to bed every night wondering how can the name of the anointed, not Our Lady, God's Son, God's King, the Christ, be made known in the world.
[25:23] It overran everything he did in business, every meeting he attended, and he wanted the people of God to live in righteousness in a state of perpetual worship and song.

That's why it says back in our text in Psalm 132, verse 7, let us go to His dwelling place, let us worship at His footstool.
That's what he wanted. verse 9, He wanted the people to be clothed in righteousness and ever in song.
What about us? What about you? What about me? Are we satisfied merely with trying to be faithful, humble, hardworking?
Are we satisfied or is the end of our passion really governed in our achievements and our accomplishments in that weird healthy but unhealthy mix of making a name for God and maybe making one for ourselves along the way?
[26:43] What are you trying to build? Why are you rising in the morning? the simple answer to that question is to ask yourself what preoccupies my mind?

Is it the flesh? Well, it ought to be put away. Is it simply faithfulness? Well, that's good but there's more for you.
Is it fruitfulness? Even divine fruitfulness rather than human fruitfulness? Well, that's wonderful but there's either more. you and I need the heart after God's heart which is after the fame of His own name.
What do we know of these hardships? What do we know of these afflictions? What do we know of spending our own money accruing our own materials laying our own foundation for a day that we will not see?
You know, the word passion you need to know me on this and I'm going to wrap up.
[27:56] I've always hated the word passion. It's so prevalent in churches today. It was even hard for me to use it but it was just so clear in the outline David's passion God's promise. Passion in the Greek is actually it's neuter it's a neutral term so the word passion is not inherently wrong or evil or negatively inclined.

I kind of think it is. That's my own proclivity. It's most often used negatively. Like when you're in the Bible and you're reading and someone the passions come out usually it's used negatively but it's not necessarily defined that way.
It's used positively at times and that's what I'm asking you today that that word especially if you're younger you want a passion for God.
What does that mean? That means God's fame not yours. God's son not you. That was David. That's David. What a man. What a man. I mean he really that really was the preoccupation of his private life.
[29:11] What a man. We got to chase him down. God's promise. Well what does God do with a man like that?

He says well you are one unique dude I'm bringing my anointed through you. I'll build your house my fame through your line.
And from David to Solomon from Solomon to the division to the fall of Assyria to the road to Babylon to the indecisive 400 year period of the return to the angelic announcement on the hillside to a virgin named Mary to a carpenter named Joseph to Jesus God's son son of David son of Abraham he is the presence of God in the world the ark he is the place of God's mercy he is the mercy seat it is his blood God that makes access to God and therefore it is him that we ought to lift up we ought to be preoccupied with how we can make his name great that's God's oath he said well David you're swearing to me

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I'll swear to you you swear to me this is really what your heart's on about I will fulfill it you want a dwelling place for me for the people of God David in verse 7 look at the parallelism in verse 14 God says this is my resting place forevermore here where I dwell for I have desired it you want your priests to be righteous and your people to be singing verse 9 well what does God say in verse 16 well her priests I will clothe with salvation and her saints will shout for joy all hail God's anointed David's desire for God's fame God's promise to secure his own name the Lord Jesus Christ the irony of the cross accomplished I want to close with the words of David to Solomon arise and get to work that's what he said to him not merely to be faithful not merely to be fruitful for the fame of his name the creator of the heavens and the earth may God through the reading and preaching of his word and the power of his spirit help us to recover a biblical passion for God may his glory grow in the preoccupation of your mind may your life work be his name for anything less will be wood hay and stumble and will not stand indeed it will buckle and fall buttressed under the strength of your own labor rather than the honor of his son we holy trinity church must build something that lasts and that outlasts and to do so our names come off the corner stone
Jesus' name goes on arise get to work amen our heavenly father we thank you for this psalm and we ask that you would reorder our hearts to serve you in christ's name amen let's stay

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