

"The Unbreakable Promise to David's Line" Psalm 132

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[0 : 00] Let's ask the Lord's blessing as we open up his word. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your word.

! Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your word. We thank you that you have preserved this psalm, Psalm 132, through the ages. Lord, it is about the building and dedication and the purpose of your temple.

And although your temple does not stand in Jerusalem any longer, it is still so very pertinent for us this morning. Help us to understand the reality of your temple, that you have always desired to dwell amongst your people.

And Lord, we thank you that your son, Jesus Christ, has done just that. We ask your blessing on this morning. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

If you have a Bible, please turn with me to Psalm 132. We have a stack of Bibles at the back welcome table. Grab one at any time. You'd do me a great favor if you could follow along.

[1 : 04] This may be familiar to many of you, maybe all of you. I will insert my own name and actually the name of Christine as well into this. These were the vows we said, probably similar to the vows you said if you're married.

And it went something like this for us. I, Daniel, take thee, Christine, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health to love and to cherish, till death do us part according to God's holy ordinance, till death do us part according to God's holy ordinance, and there too I give thee my troth.

I don't think we said that last part. Christine said something similar. She said, I, Christine, take Daniel, take thee, Daniel, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part according to God's holy ordinance, and there too I give thee my troth.

Sweet words. These are vows and promises that men make to women during the wedding ceremony. And it's, the language is taken from the Book of Common Prayer, and they will be familiar to you because most vows in the English language draw upon the words of the prayer book. I bring that up just to say that those vows are beautiful, but for those of you who are married, do you remember making those vows and thinking, what if I can't follow through?

[2 : 41] For me, it was, I think, the second day, not the day after we were married, but the day after that, I just thought, I mean, I felt the weight of it, of what I, the promises I made to Christine, and I was really scared.

Not that I made the wrong decision, not a bit, but my goodness, what on earth was I promising? What on earth was I promising? I was making vows to her, to a church full of our friends and family, and to God himself.

vows that, I mean, I hope, I would hope to keep in all circumstances, but there are so many factors outside of our control that to make a promise is a bit of a scary thing.

There's so many things we cannot account for, so many contingencies that may come up that we can't necessarily figure out or get around. And this might seem like a really down thing to say, or maybe even an irrational thing, but for those who are married, in some ways, it's actually very rational, because it's rooted in reality.

The factors that are completely outside of our control, promises turn out to be extremely hard to keep, even for the most noble and capable of us.

[4 : 10] One of the things in the marriage ceremony, just in case I'm coming across as if I am already planning on breaking my vows, not at all, that's why we ask the Lord for his help.

We ask the Lord's blessing in a marriage ceremony. Nevertheless, promises in general. You know, I don't know if it's just because I'm getting older, but when people promise me things, I'm just immediately suspicious that they can't keep the promises.

And it's not because I have a whole kind of history of broken promises, but because life is tough, and promises are easy to make, but are extremely hard to keep.

Trusting in the promises of God found in Holy Scripture also are, it's not necessarily an easy thing to do. I mean, at first it seems like a wonderful thing, a sure thing.

The promise of salvation, peace in the storm, joy that transcends circumstance, eternal life, and so on. But then an unforeseen illness happens.

[5 : 15] Somebody betrays our trust. We fail to meet expectations. We fail to meet expectations. Maybe we've just come in second place a few too many times.

All right? All these different circumstances that come our way that are not ideal, and suddenly the promises of God begin to show cracks. We might think God is unjust.

We might think he is aloof. Or that maybe we have run out of grace. The promises of God are then treated like the promises of Daniel, the promises of you, or you, the promises of people that don't keep promises.

We view the promises of God as riddled with cracks and rendered seemingly untrustworthy. So having faith in the promises of God has, it requires belief.

It requires faith. And the difficulty with that is that keeping faith can be very difficult. So as that is a bit of an introduction, we continue on in our series on the Psalms of Ascent.

[6 : 29] And we get to Psalm 132. Now the Psalms of Ascent go to 134, but really Psalm 132 is kind of the pinnacle of the Psalms of Ascent.

They express, all of them, and especially this one, expresses a deep longing for the promise-making, promise-keeping God to remain faithful to his promises, and especially the promise of his presence, that he will be with us and that we will be with him.

The question is whether God has kept his promises in the past. Has he proven true in the past? And the answer to that question will help us to decide if we can trust God to keep his promises today and for the future.

So a lot rides on it, on if God is a promise-keeping God. So our Psalm 132 envisions God blessing the temple with his presence. So we will examine the three main players and their actions.

Verses 1 to 7, we're going to look at David's efforts. Verses 8 to 10, we're going to look at Solomon's prayer. And then finally, 11 to 18, we'll look at the Lord's promise.

[7 : 40] So David's efforts, Solomon's prayer, the Lord's promise. Turn with me to verse 1. We'll read verses 1 to 5. 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.

David's devotion to the Lord was the defining trait that really distinguished him from his days as a lowly shepherd tending his father Jesse's flock. He was a man after God's own heart.

His desire was to fulfill the Lord's will and to bring him honor and glory. And this is what is described in these opening five verses. David, for all of his mistakes, all of his sins, all of his warring, he, with patience and sacrifice, made preparations to build a temple for the Lord.

We can read about this in 1 Chronicles chapter 22, the amount of preparation he made. David desired to honor the Lord, both he and the nation of Israel that he led.

[9 : 01] The temple was to be the house of the Lord and specifically it was to be the place where the Ark of the Covenant would be kept. If you're new to the faith or if you need a bit of a refresher, the Ark of the Covenant was a chest-like object that the Israelites carried through the desert after the Lord delivered them from Egyptian slavery.

It held within it the two tablets with the Ten Commandments on it that Moses brought down from the Mount of Sinai. It also had Aaron's staff which had budded, Aaron being the brother of Moses and the priest of the Lord.

But more importantly and for us specifically this morning it symbolized, the Ark symbolized the very presence of the Lord amongst his people. What happened was that the Ark was neglected and forgotten.

During King Saul's rule, so King Saul was the first king of Israel after the people rejected God as their king. They wanted a king like the other nations so the prophet Samuel with God's instruction anointed King Saul but King Saul he failed in his duty as the king and the Ark was neglected. For some 20 years it was forgotten about. We read about this actually in verse 6. It says this, Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah, that is Bethlehem.

[10:30] We found it in the fields of Jear. But those places as good as they may be, Bethlehem being the city of David, they weren't Zion, they weren't Jerusalem, they weren't the city, the holy city of God.

God chose Zion as his home, as the place where he would rest. Not Bethlehem or the fields of Jear. The Lord was to have prominence, not to be forgotten in obscurity. That is why David was so zealous to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and he noticed that the Ark was in a tent while he lived in a home and for David this wasn't okay.

So he desired to build a temple for the Lord so that the Lord would be honored above all people, that the people would worship him properly and David wants to do right by the Lord and he did indeed do right for he leads the people into God's presence.

He's a good and faithful king and that's reflected actually in verse 7. If you read with me verse 7, let us go to the, this is the people speaking here, let us go to his dwelling place.

[11:41] Let us worship at his footstool. You see how this divine selfless leadership aiming to honor and glorify the Lord on his terms, what it does is it mediates God's presence to his people.

What David isn't doing is treating God as a talisman. He's not treating God like the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the money lenders that we read about in Luke 19 in the gospel reading.

God is not a means to our own glory but rather David is glorifying the Lord at the cost of himself. I mean, we see this in verse 1 David enduring hardships and sacrifices so that he could make provisions for the temple to be built and what's the result?

The people worship the Lord with righteousness and joy and gladness that his obedience is a blessing to more than just him but it extends out to the nation.

This is what godly leadership looks like. David has acted in faith that God's promise to dwell amongst his people still holds true and what he does is he acts upon the promise.

[12:59] God's people respond and God blesses them with his presence. It's actually a very beautiful opening few verses. However, it is not David who builds the temple. If you know any of the story, David, I mean, he is doing something that is, that God is quite pleased with but because David has warred so much, he has too much blood on his hands it says in 1 Chronicles 22 that God would not allow him to build the temple.

Even though David swore that he would build the temple, he swore to God and again, we start to see a human promise not be fulfilled. It would be his son that would build the temple.

So does this mean that the promise of God's presence would be negated? I mean, David was the one who was supposed to make it happen and it didn't happen. So, is God's will contingent on man's promises?

Put differently for us to consider, are God's promises of love and faithfulness dependent on our promises of the same to him? David's efforts come up short.

Let's look at Solomon's prayer, 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 and let your saints shout for joy.

[14:29] For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one. Although David did not have the privilege of building the temple, his son Solomon was the one to carry out the work until the temple was completed.

Verses 8 to 10 is a near verbatim quote from King Solomon at the temple dedication once it's completed in 2 Chronicles chapter 6.

Solomon dedicates the completed temple to the Lord and the ark of the covenant was brought into the temple itself. It's the completion of David's vision, the Lord's will for the ark, for the people of Israel.

The temple properly built for the rightful worship of God was a blessing for the people and therefore the next chapter in 2 Chronicles chapter 7, God comes down with a show of his presence that would be unmistakable.

He is pleased. God is dwelling amongst his people once again. It would make sense then that this is the pinnacle of the Psalms of Ascent. Again, the Psalms of Ascent were and are these collection of psalms that the Israelites as they went on their pilgrim pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times a year they would sing as they ascended the roads up to Jerusalem.

[15 : 57] The high point would be worshipping in the temple and this is what it envisions that God dwelling amongst his people and they worshipping him in righteousness and with joy.

It seems that David's efforts to keep the covenant even though he did not keep his promise would be enough for the Lord to show favor to the Davidic line especially his anointed son Solomon. I mean we see this in verse 10 for the sake of your servant David this is Solomon really praying to the Lord for himself and his offspring for the sake of your servant David do not turn away the face of your anointed one.

So David far from being perfect having a heart that was soft towards the Lord the Lord is honoring Solomon as a result. David did not get to enjoy the fruit of his labor with the building of the temple the sacrifice and the effort and the hardships that he made for the Lord it turns out that they were not in vain after all.

David had gathered money and resources and spent a great deal of time preparing for a temple that he would not build and this is like a bit of an aside point it doesn't really connect much with the text but I'll just say this this is something we can take heart in that the sacrifices and the efforts that we make for the Lord are always worth it even though we don't see the fruit immediately.

[17 : 32] There have been people in the history of the church that began making cathedrals and churches that would take decades maybe even centuries to build.

They would start it knowing that they would never complete it. we're not building that I mean it would be great if we did but nevertheless we are called to obey the Lord in all sorts of different arenas and areas in our lives and often times we do not see the fruit of our obedience.

We don't see the fruit of our prayers. We don't feel that we are being honored by God or get the benefits of keeping pure or spending our time and our money on things that benefit the Lord and bring glory to his name not increase our comfort.

We don't get to taste the fruits but we can be sure that God sees it and he honors it and it brings him gladness. So it's a bit of an aside but I'll say do not grow weary of obeying the Lord even if you don't see the fruit of it because he does.

He sees what you are doing and it pleases him. Let's get back to the text. David lays the groundwork and Solomon builds the temple.

[19 : 00] The prayer that Solomon is praying here is offered and immediately afterwards like I mentioned in chapter 7 of 2nd Chronicles chapter 7 the presence of God fills the temple.

the Lord's promises remain firm. The Lord is among his people. He has not turned his face away from his anointed. But such a reality was short lived.

By the end of Solomon's reign this righteous wise king of Israel he was overtaken by infidelity and passion.

He erected shrines to false gods and he polluted the very city the very city that the Lord loved. And by the time Solomon died and his son Rehoboam became king the kingdom was divided.

The northern ten tribes eventually falling to the Assyrians in the 8th century BC and the southern two tribes falling in the 6th century. Israel was shattered.

[20 : 02] The tribes scattered. It seems like the promise of God were nullified. It appears that the Lord turned his face away from David's line.

David's anointed line. And especially if we consider verse 12 and I know we're skipping and we'll touch on it in the next point. But this is what verse 12 says. If your sons keep my commandment this is the Lord speaking if your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them their sons also forever shall sit on your throne.

The Davidic line failed to uphold the covenant so the Lord withdrew his favor from not just the Davidic line but the entire nation.

And what did it lead to? It did not lead to a greater life but rather calamity and exile. And like David's promise Solomon's prayer and posture had weak foundations and it ultimately failed.

I mean what he prayed was excellent but his posture was weak surely God's promise of eternal dwelling with his people it must be rendered void at least according to verse 12 we've had David's efforts excellent in many ways but failing Solomon's prayer of dedication and posture excellent in many ways but failing how about the Lord's promise we've read verse 12 the conditional promise of God's favor upon David's line if covenant faithful covenant faithlessness continues but what about verse 11 I'll read verse 11 and 12 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 and then verse 12 here's the conditional the condition that God puts on the Davidic line if your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them their sons also forever shall sit on your throne

[22 : 06] God is unchanging in theological terms we call this the mutability of God God is unchanging very important doctrine of God to remember what does it mean it means that he is what he is which is what he has always been and what he will always be he has always existed he has never changed he is perfect in every aspect and it means that the promises he makes are not contingent on factors outside of his control why because nothing is outside of his control if he promises something it will come to pass he is also all knowing we call this God's omniscience nothing surprises him or escapes his notice nothing we can do feel or think will elude him he knows all all what you are thinking right now he knows he knows it crystal clear so we see a bit of a tension here okay because on one hand we have this unchanging

God who knows everything which means that his promises are always true and sure and that there are no factors that he has failed to consider and yet at the same time it would seem that God's covenant promises are contingent upon David's faithfulness both of these things can't really be true there's a tension here verse 11 states the Lord which is in the original language is his covenant name there's such an emphasis on God's nature of covenant making covenant keeping God the Lord swore to David a true truth it's as if he is super charging his oath not that he needs to but this is what he is doing he is swearing a true truth and yet David's line has utterly and spectacularly failed presents us with a very troubling challenge to our faith in God it suggests that God has either lied to us and is untrustworthy or he is not powerful enough to keep his promises as if he could not anticipate the consequences arising from fallible humans who are just unable to obey his commands due to our propensity to sin it's a bit of a conundrum and if that is the case isn't it just wiser to simply live eat and drink for tomorrow we die if God can't come through on his promises then let us just live it up or maybe we should just seek out a greater

God who can offer a better promise or actually uphold the promises that he makes see there's a tension here in verse 11 and 12 and we have to resolve it or else our faith really is starting to crumble or at least the object of our faith is starting to crumble the stakes are high much depends on whether God will keep his promises is God God or is he like us any person can make a promise or a covenant even God but can he keep it I think we'll find the answer in verses 13 and following let's read starting verse 13 all the way down to 18 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 lamp for my anointed his enemies I will clothe with shame but on him his crown will shine if there's any question about whether God will keep his promises even though David and his offspring are constantly breaking the promises so much so that they are they are exiled they are exiled and even in our gospel text that we read Jesus makes it very clear that Jerusalem will be raised to the ground why?

because the people of God did not recognize their hour of visitation okay? so God's people constantly failing and yet verse 13 and following it's a resounding declaration that God says my promises are bigger than your failure they're bigger they're so so much bigger as your capacity to mess things up is huge okay?

[27 : 02] my capacity to fulfill my promises is infinite this is what it's saying in verses 13 and 18 do you notice how as we move into this final section God's words are expanded far beyond David's immediate line and the blessing is far greater than David could imagine and this whole section is riddled with God saying I will not hey let's do this together he's saying I will he's not saying I'm going to do 90% of it you're going to do some heavy lifting but I'm going to do the majority of it it's just I will I will I will and it's blessing upon blessing he's the one who will bring righteousness to the nation he's the one who will feed the poor which is to say that even the least among us will have

everything they need for life and holiness bread is so much more than just bread in the Bible those that trust in false gods will be clothed with shame but on him his crown will shine how will God fulfill this promise well he has in part and in a huge kind of way

Jesus fulfills everything this psalm promises he is ultimately the Davidic king he is the the the true and and greatest child of David who guides his people in righteousness and proper worship like the ark Jesus he embodies the very presence of God dwelling among us if you remember in John chapter 1 verse 14 it says that that the word tabernacled or dwelt or visited I think Eugene Pearson in the message calls it moved into the neighborhood it's that God literally the word made flesh dwelt amongst us if the ark embodies God's presence then Jesus has come in flesh something far greater than the ark he is the great high priest robed in righteousness leading us in praising the father with shouts of joy he is the perfect sacrifice the blemish free lamb sacrifice for all of us once and for all an offering given to us because of love and grace and then here's the beautiful thing here because again

David's line is all but destroyed okay it's all but destroyed it's like David's line is this beautiful gorgeous tree that has been toppled over by a windstorm or cut down because it's disease and you see this giant ugly stump that used to be this beautiful grand tree and it says here in verse 17 there I will make a horn to sprout for David it's as if God is making a new tree sprout up from this stump and it is a horn which is this picture in the Bible of victory and strength and this is who Jesus is and he fulfills it and he does this by perfectly obeying and glorifying God not by charging in with a sword drawn by being hung upon the cross defeating death by death upon him was laid all of our iniquities and he rises again to new life so that all who put our faith and trust in him we get to be with him forever

I mean that is this is the thing it's not about just going to heaven or avoiding hell it's about being in God's presence forever it's all throughout scriptures it's in psalm 132 and it is the hope of all those who call upon the name of the Lord after centuries of exile longing wandering and fear that God would not keep his covenant the Lord fulfilled his promise centuries later but he still fulfilled it and in a greater way than David or Solomon or Israel or even us could have ever hoped how can we be sure that God's promises will come to pass even though we do not see them is because what he promised to Solomon it came true in Jesus which means the promise that he will come again to wipe away every tear to do away with all disease to do away with all evil that will come to pass as well he has never not kept!

a promise! friends trust in the Lord rely on God's power to uphold his promise more than your ability to keep yours don't promise the Lord that you will do good so that he will bring you into his presence cast all of your faith upon his promise that says that he has made a way through Christ to bring you into his he has established his dwelling place amongst us praise be to God amen