

# An Everlasting Covenant - Communion Preparatory service

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 02 September 2022

Preacher: Rev Kenneth M Ferguson

[ 0 : 00 ] And we'll read the first five verses of this chapter.

2 Samuel 23 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, The man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

The God of Israel said, The rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things unsure. For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to go.

[ 1 : 26 ] We read that these be the last words of David.

And I suppose when people near the end of their life, the people around them want to know what they say.

And when the Apostle Paul was nearing the end of his life, he writes to young Timothy words of counsel and direction, as to how he ought to live and how he ought to serve the Lord.

But he says to himself, as it were, looking back over his life, I have fought the good fight.

I have kept the faith. And then he looks forward and he says, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the good judge of all the earth will give me at that day, and not to me only, but also unto all them who love his appearing.

[ 2 : 55 ] It's as if the Apostle at that point is looking back over the life he has spent in the service of God, and then realizing that his time is short, he nevertheless looks forward to the glory that awaits him.

And we see that David here, in 2 Samuel 23, is said to be uttering the last words of David.

Maybe not his exact last words verbally, but certainly his last words that were inspired and that we have with us in the Holy Scriptures.

And there are three things I'd like to highlight from the verses we've read. First of all, he gives an account of the way the Lord has elevated him from a low position to a very high position.

It says here, The man who was raised up on high, and so on. Secondly, he talks about the kind of direction that God gave him as someone who had been raised up by the Lord to serve him.

[ 4 : 31 ] And it's as if he says, Verse 3, He, the God of Israel, the rock of Israel, speak to me, saying these words, He that ruleth over men must be just, holding in the fear of God.

He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

It's as if David here is recalling what the Lord said to him as to how he ought should live his life as a person elevated by God to a position of great authority and responsibility.

He mustn't live any way he likes. He must live the way the Lord says. That's the second thing. And thirdly and finally, one or two words, particularly on verse 5.

He is talking as somebody who says at the beginning of this version, the authorized version, Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to go.

[ 6 : 03 ] It's as if he is not leaning upon the promotion that God gave him or the great way in which God used him.

He is casting himself completely in the face of eternity on the everlasting covenant of God. I'd like just to say one or two words on each of these three headings.

First of all, David was a man elevated by God. He was raised up on high. His origin was very mean, as they say.

He was a shepherd boy, the son of Jesse in Bethlehem. I mean, he wasn't at the very center of society among the rich and the famous.

He was really out there an ordinary person. But the Lord knew that this was the man that he was going to honor and elevate.

[ 7 : 12 ] Remember when the prophet Samuel was told to go and anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king after King Saul. And the older sons of Jesse all came forward.

And when the first one came, Samuel said to himself, surely this is the man. But the Lord said, don't look on his outward appearance. The Lord looks on the heart.

And all of these seven sons passed before Samuel and none of them were the ones that God had chosen.

Is there anybody else belonging? Well, there is the young boy out looking after the sheep. We won't sit down until he comes. And when he came, the Lord said to Samuel, arise and anoint him, for this is he.

How often do you see that kind of thing? The Lord seemingly passing the rich and the famous and the strong and the great to somebody who seemed so insignificant.

[ 8 : 19 ] Nevertheless, he was the Lord's man. He was taken from following the sheep and raised up on high. That's the next thing is the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob.

It wasn't just Samuel who anointed him. It was at God's command, the God of Jacob, the God of Israel, the God of the covenant, the God who loves his people and who knows what's best for his people.

He is the one who appointed this man, this young man, David, to the monarchy, to be king over his people, Israel.

And then it says here that he's the sweet psalmist of Israel. The sweet psalmist of Israel. Not only was he, as it were, sweet in his melody, but he was sweet in the substance of the psalms that he was led by the Holy Spirit to write down.

To the extent that when the two on the road to Emmaus, in the depths of darkness in which they found themselves, reminding themselves that Jesus had been crucified and buried, this stranger drew near them.

[ 9 : 53 ] It was Jesus, but they didn't recognize him at first. And he starts explaining to them from the scriptures, things concerning himself.

And part of the scriptures that Jesus expounded to them was from the psalms. And that particularly is what makes David the sweet psalmist of Israel.

He is inspired by God to speak of the most wonderful matters and the most glorious individual who is Jesus as Lord. Anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel.

And then it goes on, verse 2, the spirit of the Lord spoke by me and his word was on my tongue. His word, the word of God. Isn't it a privilege to be able to speak the word of God?

Isn't it a privilege to be able to listen to what God says? He himself says to us through the scriptures, I'll hear what God the Lord does speak.

[ 11 : 04 ] To his folk he'll speak peace and to his saints, but let them not return unto foolishness. Well, he was a man who was raised up to great significance and high honor by the Lord.

And I'm sure he must have been before St. Peter's mind when Peter says in 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 21, holy men of God speak as they were led or born aloft by the Spirit of God.

It wasn't their own views, they were writing, they were being led and directed by the Spirit of God as to what to write down in their inspired writings.

That's the first thing, a man who was greatly honored and elevated. Secondly, what it says regarding the way the Lord asks him to live as a person elevated to a high position.

Verse 3, the God of Israel said, the rock of Israel spake to me, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

[ 12 : 24 ] He must be just. Justice undergirds a wholesome society. Where there is injustice, there is chaos.

And this man was told to live justly, just as the prophet of old said, do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

So it was said to David here. And then it goes on to say, he shall be as the light of the morning. Verse 4, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining, after rain.

He shall be as the light of the morning, as if the Lord is saying, I have given you a light, but the light must increase, as the sun's light increases, as the morning goes on, so the light of this individual who rules over people, he must continue to shine ever more brightly.

Listen, this is what it says in the book of Proverbs, as the light of the morning, as the sun rises, that the light of the just shall be as the morning light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.

[ 14 : 05 ] And then it goes on, a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. There is a freshness about things, there is a beauty about things, with all this light and the freshness of the tender grass, a picture of attractiveness and beauty.

And that's the kind of rulers we need. That's the kind of rulers that would do us good, people who live according to what God says, and who live doing what is right.

and we pray that that is what we will have as a nation. But thirdly, and this is the one I want to particularly focus on this evening, from verse 5, David says, although my house be not so with God.

Now you'll find some of the newer translations translating that in a different way. by asking the question, is not my house so with God?

As if David stands back and looks at his reign from the mouth of the grave as it were, and he says, my house is the way I would like it to be.

[ 15 : 45 ] But I'd rather go along with the authorised version translation, and you find all the Puritans go along with that as well. That David says, although my house be not so with God, it's as if he is saying, well, I've come short.

And I believe every true Christian looking over their life will see shortcomings in their lives. They should have gone there, they should have been something that they weren't.

They should have said something or stayed quiet, they should have done things differently, and really looking back, we look over a checkered history of failings.

Yes, we look over things for which we're thankful, but failings, failings, failings. And David, rather than lean upon any credit that he may or may not feel due to himself, he turns away from himself, and he says, I am looking completely and trusting completely to that everlasting covenant ordered in all things unsure.

This is all my salvation, all my desire, although he make it not to grow. And this is why I read from chapter 7 in 2 Samuel, the account we have there of the Lord making a covenant with David, a covenant regarding his kingdom, regarding the continuation of his kingdom, because a king is going to rise, who will rule in justice, who will rule the kingdom of Christ, Christ himself.

[ 17 : 55 ] And David looks as it were, forward, down through the centuries, to the fulfilling of this covenant promise in chapter 7, that the Lord himself is going to establish his kingdom through one of his sons, who was the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is mention throughout the scripture of covenant, and the word covenant in the original, it means a cutting.

And when a covenant was cut, it was as if people were making a deal regarding a situation. If you remember going back to the covenant the Lord made with Abraham, in Genesis, you find that there the Lord commanded him to cut animals down their backbone and set the halves against each other.

And the Lord then made a covenant with Abraham, a covenant of promise, promising blessings to him and his family for the future.

You see, also the covenant made with Noah, when the Lord promises that he will keep securely this world which he has made, that it will no more be flooded with a flood.

[ 19 : 38 ] And he has given the covenant sign of the rainbow in the clouds to remind us constantly that he is keeping his covenant, he is keeping his promise, he is doing what he said he would do.

You find also the covenant made with Moses, the covenant of law, when God laid down for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai, this rule of life that they had to follow and again and again they broke that covenant.

covenant. But here we see David rejoicing in this particular covenant of promise.

Now, why is he able to rejoice in this covenant? Well, the Lord's promise to him is based on a covenant made in eternity before the world was.

Between the persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God and the Father representing the Trinity saw fit to set a mediator aside or apart, even the person of his Son.

[ 21 : 08 ] And that mediator became the surety for the election, for the elect who were electing him. In other words, he agreed to take responsibility for those who were electing him from all eternity.

He agreed to come into this world in the fullness of times as the sin bearer. He agreed to fulfil the law and make it honourable.

He agreed to distribute the blessings of the covenant of grace to each one of God's elect down through the years to the end of time.

And David says, I don't want to look at my own reign and be proud of it. I don't want to look at the elevation that God saw fit to bestow upon me, raising me from nothing to the throne of Israel.

I don't want to look on my achievements in battle. I don't want to look at any of these things. I want to look upon what God has said and what God has promised.

[ 22 : 33 ] Now, when we think of the covenant of grace or the covenant of redemption in eternity, we see that the covenants made with David and the others we have mentioned already, they, as it were, take their cue from the eternal covenant.

It's the same God that speaks. And the truth that he spoke once, he continues to enforce and apply.

Now, it's a wonderful thing when people who have experienced the Lord's blessing in their lives, that they're able, as it were, to look away from themselves unto the God who has done great things for them.

And I thought this afternoon I would look up one of Dr. MacDonald Ferrantosh's religious poems.

You know that he composed a trilogy of poems. The Christian on the way to Jordan was one of them. The Christian at the bank or the border of Jordan, the second one.

[ 23 : 59 ] And the third one was the Christian having crossed the Jordan, as it were, looking back and enjoying the blessings of glory.

And this particular one, the Christian on his way to Jordan, this is a translation by Dr. John MacLeod, who was principal of the college in the early 1930s.

What the Saviour has done and suffered in his people's place is alone my one foundation and not any given grace.

This my shelter is and refuge as I go to death and grave. This will safely bring me home for vision of the lamb I'll have.

maybe some of you would know the garlic better than that because it is not what experiences we have had are really that ought to be the foundation of our hope for eternity but what Christ has done and who he is.

[ 25 : 17 ] and the Lord Jesus Christ is the sure foundation and the covenant that he has undertaken to apply and the blessings of that covenant these are the blessings that will secure us as we journey through life and as we journey on to eternity.

Well one or two more things. I was thinking in particular of this marvellous word that I mentioned already. In the Gallic Christ is our oasis.

He is our surety. He himself is. Not the blessings we have received although we may have received many blessings. Not the peace we feel.

Not the faith we have. None of these things in themselves entitle us to rest upon them. Rather on Christ himself who is the mediator of the covenant and we need to look unto Jesus and to look unto him constantly day by day in every circumstance of life.

Show me thy glory Moses Moses of old said. And that's what the people of God want. They want to see more of his glory and be filled more and more with wonder at who he is and what he has done.

[ 26 : 57 ] what about ourselves this evening in this New Testament age this new covenant of grace in our day.

What does it mean for us? Well the promises of the scripture are before us. if we confess our sin he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He will fulfill what he will fulfill in the experience of all who trust in him.

We need to trust in him in him not in our experience not in anything else or anyone else but we need to cast ourselves upon him and him alone.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

[ 28 : 21 ] We are exhorted to come and trust in him because he is our surety he is our sure saviour he is the foundation upon which we are asked to build.

Remember what he says and I'm going to quote another one or two verses what he himself says come unto me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you learn of me I am meek and lowly in heart you shall find rest unto your souls my yoke is easy and my burden is light and then he goes on to say in John's gospel whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out all that the father gives will come to me and whosoever comes to me I will in no wise cast out what an amazing saviour he is he has done all that's required for our eternal salvation if David were to look back over his life and remember the number of battles he fought and the victories he had thinking of

Goliath particularly at the very beginning of his association with King Saul he slew Goliath because he went out against him not in his own strength or his own wisdom but in the strength of the Lord of Israel and that little stone that left his sling had the almighty power of God behind it he will not boast in his victories he will boast in his God he will not boast in his elevation he will boast in his God he will not boast in himself great man that he was he will boast in his God and then he goes on to say that this everlasting covenant is ordered in all things and sure what an amazing statement that is how minute and particular

God's application of covenant blessings are in the experience of God's people I mean he knows you when you're convicted of your sin he knows you when you're downcast he knows you when you're backslidden he knows you in every situation that you have on the Christian journey and Christian path and he is able to help you my grace is sufficient for you my strength is made perfect in weakness weakness he knows all of his own people like the shepherd knows his flock individually the shepherd in Israel if there was a sick or a weak lamb he would bring it into a special part of the tent and if it wasn't making much progress he would lay it on his bosom and make sure that it got all the attention it needed well if the shepherd in Israel was able to do that how much more will the good shepherd do that in the experience of all of his people because this covenant and its blessings are so focused upon the individual needs of individual

Christians on their individual journeys that David said although my house be not so with God nevertheless he made with me an everlasting covenant that's ordered in all things he may be able to foresee more and more difficulties arising in his own family circle after he leaves this world but he knows that everything that God has promised will work out well for the people of God ordered in all things and then it says ordered in all things and sure what can we say today that is sure to us where none of us are sure that we'll ever reach home this evening none of us are sure of anything from that point of view but the people of

[ 33 : 21 ] God have faith to believe that the covenant of grace in the hands of their glorious surety and mediator that is sure to them that he has got blessings stored up for them against every eventuality of life and then he says this is all my salvation this is it I mean he's not going to lean on anything else it's like Dr.

Donloch said in these marvelous words not our experience not the grace we received but the one from whom we received it he's the one to whom we look and he is the one we lean on don't lean on your experience but lean on the Christ who is able to give the experience of eternal life this is he says all my salvation who mustn't have anything else beside him and then he says this is all my desire all my desire well looking at the promise of God to David regarding his kingdom and the king who was going to come through him that was his great desire he was committing himself to the fulfillment of that promise in God's good time and that's the way the people of God need still to be that the covenant

God apply covenant grace in every situation of life and we don't look for anything else I'm not sure if I told this here it's a little note in Gaelic and you can translate it some of you will know the couplet anyway a man said to me once on his deathbed in hospital I asked him how he was and he said well I have in Christ everything my soul needs and I'll never say that it's not enough and we see that David here with an inspired statement says it's all my desire all I want to be found in

Christ not having my own righteousness which is of the law but the righteousness which is of the faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God by faith and then he says at the very end of verse five that little phrase although he make it not to grow I'm not 100% sure what that means but I think from the experience that Christians have they feel that they're not growing in the knowledge of Christ and the knowledge of the things of God as much as they would like they want to have deeper roots into Jesus as Saviour they want to have a deeper understanding a deeper appreciation a clearer view of the glory of Jesus in his passion in his work they want to have more understanding and they feel as if they're just little pygmies on the road they want to grow the

Lord has given us the means of grace and if we use them faithfully the Lord can use them to make us grow the word of God sacraments of the New Testament prayer the sacrament is to be dispensed God willing in this house on Sabbath morning if you have not yet come to the Lord's table and you know the Lord as your Saviour and you're able to follow the sentiments of David here when he looks to his surety his covenant Saviour and looks away from anything and everything else as a hope for eternity well you're in good company if you want to make known your love to Jesus that will be an opportunity for you

[ 38 : 56 ] God willing on the Lord's day God hath made with me an everlasting covenant God makes known to us by his word and spirit the suitableness and the relevance of Jesus as Saviour to us and he enables us to embrace him by faith as he is freely offered to us in the gospel a man who was elevated in his position a man who was instructed us to how we ought to live and a man who had confidence in the God of all grace the covenant God saying that that covenant is all his salvation and all his desire can you say that can I say that

I pray we can let us pray help us this evening Lord to bow before you as our covenant God and Saviour as the Saviour who came into this world to seek and to save the lost as the Saviour who died and rose again and who is alive evermore and he is alive to make continual intercession on behalf of his people we pray that each one of us might know the love of Jesus Christ constraining us to live not unto ourselves but unto him who died for us and rose again bless us now as we sing your praise in conclusion and forgive our sins in Jesus name and for his sake

Amen a HOPE God you For us to have ever on now as we could be alone and we see ■■■■ of the lane and come