

Sing by Faith

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[0 : 00] Please follow along with me. I'm going to read Psalm 132, and I want you to look, and we'll read the whole psalm to you. Read all the lyrics to this psalm here. Looking at different historical events that get highlighted in this psalm, Cecily told me before the service that a snake's favorite subject in school, you'll like this, Jeff, is history, all right?

And how many of you, history was your favorite subject in school, all right? Well, even if it's not your favorite subject, we're not talking about the Ottoman Empire or anything of that nature. We're talking about the history of God's Word, God delivering and working in people's lives.

And this psalm is filled with history that you need to know as we study the psalm, as it references David or a tabernacle. You need to know those stories that were available to us in 2 Samuel and throughout the Old Testament.

That's what I want to help you do as we read through this psalm, is to make sure you know what was the historical event that it's alluding to and what would it cause those original singers to be thinking of as they were walking together and singing this song.

And so we'll look for the remembrance of David's desire to build the temple, that passage where he had it in his heart to build a temple. He wasn't able to, but this psalm talks about that desire. Or David bringing the ark up to Jerusalem or the enthronement ceremony.

[1 : 23] And these are being sung by pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem for a great feast. Verse 1, Lord, remember David and all his afflictions, how we swear unto the Lord and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.

Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house nor go up into my bed. I will not give sleep to mine eyes or slumber to mine eyelids until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

Lo, we have heard of it, of Ephrathah. We found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into his tabernacles. We will worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength.

Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed. The Lord has sworn in truth unto David.

He will not turn from it. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony, that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne forevermore.

[2 : 31] For the Lord hath chosen Zion, and he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever. Here will I dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision.

I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There I will make the horn of David to bud. I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon himself shall he crown himself, but shall his crown flourish. Can you hear it? Probably not from the way that I'm reading it, but this was a song here of redemption.

Not quoting it, not reading it, but singing this song. Imagine the pilgrims singing it as they're walking up to the heights here. Festival's coming, their hearts are lifted up.

This song is remembered, and it's alluded to in scriptures. In Acts chapter number 7, we see Stephen referring to it. That's a large portion where he gives many historical accounts of what God has done, and namely how Jesus was crucified.

[3 : 39] In Acts 7, 46, it alludes to verse number 5 where it says, We have found favor before God and desire to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. And Peter alludes to it in Acts as well, and it's in, I don't have the passage here, but we find it in the scriptures as well, quoted once again.

And so I bring that to your mind to remind you that this song, it has been remembered, that it had been kept. It was sung by generations to come.

I want you to remember that, that this song that was sung, when they were singing that medley of the song that I didn't know, they got into a song that I did know, right? Of how I trust him, and that takes you somewhere, doesn't it?

It takes you to standing by your grandmother, or it takes you to a place somewhere, and it reminds you. This psalm that I just read to you is a song that they remembered, and that was kept, and that it was sung in Acts, and it was given to us throughout scriptures.

First thing that we're told to do in this psalm is it says, remember David and all of his afflictions. So let's do that. Let's remember David and all of his afflictions, that he was despised and criticized by his family.

[4 : 54] He had many life and death struggles. He was accused of treason and treachery. He was attacked by the connected and the powerful and the ruthless. He lived many years as a fugitive, as a wanted man, living in a cave at times.

He had family, home, friends, and career taken from him. He lived a life of waiting for God's promises. He experienced significant seasons of backsliding and being away from the Lord.

He was accepted as a king reluctantly. He faced many enemies and battles throughout the years. He was openly criticized. People kick-dusted him and spat upon him.

His wife despised him on one occasion, said he wasn't a very good dancer. I think that's what I remember her saying. He suffered because of his sin and scandal. He endured great conflict and problems among of his own children.

He suffered a coup staged by a son, followed by a civil war. Remember the afflictions of David. David knows the life that you have lived.

[5 : 58] Definitely there's things in his life that he didn't, that you haven't experienced, but the emotions that we live in life, David felt those afflictions, the highs and the lows. We're not only told to remember David's affliction in this psalm, but also his dedication.

That's verses 4 and 5, where he said, I will not sleep, and I will not let my eyelids slumber. I will not let my eyelids close until what? I have found a place for the Lord, a habitation of the mighty God of Jacob.

And so you remember that story. He tells the prophet, I want to build the Lord a house. The prophet says, that sounds like a great idea. And then at night, the prophet says he learns from God. That's not a great idea. He has to go back and say, yeah, we need to think this through.

You're not going to be able to do this. Solomon does, but David is very much involved. He gathers the things for it. He finds the location for it. He gives his life to the building of that temple.

Spurgeon said in regards to that, Charles Spurgeon, a pastor from England many years ago, said, I wish that this same zeal would take firm hold of all Christians. How many there are who dwell in their sealed houses, while the house of God lies waste?

[7 : 03] They can provide abundantly for themselves, but for God's cause, for God's gospel, for a place wherein the poor may meet for the preaching of thy word, they do not seem to care.

And so that desire that we would have for a place to come to worship, the desire we would have, the place for us to gather God's word, would help us understand what David wanted for his Lord.

He said, I have a place. Why don't we have one? Why don't we build a place? And he wanted to build that. That was in his heart. He had a heart for the house of God.

That takes us to verse number six. And I answer, what is the it in this verse? Though we've heard of Ephrathah, and we found it in the fields of the woods. And you wonder, what did they find in the fields of the woods?

During the reign of Saul, the tabernacle and the ark were neglected. 1 Chronicles 13, 3. And let us bring again the ark of our God to us, for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.

[8 : 04] Something that was so central to their story, such a big portion of our Bible. We see it being put together. We see it being built. We see it being protected. We see it being carried, that there was a time that it was neglected and left.

And so now they're going to go and find it and bring it back. And how do they express it? In verse number seven, they say, we will go up into this tabernacle. We will worship at his footstool.

I would love to hear how this song was sung, but I must believe that that verse seven would be a place where hands would be raised and we would say, let us go into the tabernacles.

Let us go into the presence of God. Let us worship at his footstool as the song of ascent. And so verses one through five, we have this example of David. And then verse number eight, we have an example of Moses.

Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength. A reference to Numbers, chapter number 10. So we have all these references to the history of Israel that they are singing about with this anticipation as they would be singing it and walking and believing.

[9 : 11] Verse 10, For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed. What a strong prayer that is said here. For David's sake, Lord, turn not your face away from me.

I believe David, the boy, and I spoke about this and the story of Calvary Chapel and a man named Larry Frisbee. And there's just this portion in his story that was shown where he just, he's outside of his house and he's on the ground and he's just crying out and saying, God, don't remove your hand from me.

You've been working and I don't want you to remove that from me. And you see that and you hear that story and it's something that you'd feel and experience.

David said, For David's sake, turn not your face, thine anointed. God, if you don't shine upon us, if you're not blessing us, then we are absolutely without any hope.

This is how my basketball coach told me when I was a teenager. Just real simple. He told me, I was standing on the basketball court, he said, Trent, you've got two options. You can enjoy all the sins of the season that come with being a teenager or you can have the power of God upon your life and you can help people but you don't get to do both.

[10 : 26] And you should just go ahead and decide today which one do you want to live for? And he had a way of bringing it very down, very much to the point. That's this prayer is, God, I am, we don't pray down the Holy Spirit, we're indwelt as believers, but we're saying, Father, we want to yield to you, your work in our lives, your ministering in our lives.

We don't want sin to take place in our lives. We want to be wholly given to you. Wonderful prayer, one that we should be praying in our own words often. Then it speaks about the promises that are made to David on his behalf which are a fulfillment of Scripture that is given in 2 Samuel that his throne will be established forever.

And then there's promises in verse number 13 and 15 about how Zion is chosen. There's a connection between the choosing David and his descendants and then God's chosen choice of Jerusalem or Zion as the sacred dwelling place in which he desired.

And then it ends here with speaking of promises made to his servants that he would close the priests with salvation and his enemies with shame, verses 17 and 18.

And there's a sense in which this section of Psalm takes these previous requests and answers beyond all expectation. William Boyce says, The people have asked God to come to this resting place as the ark was brought to Jerusalem.

[11 : 45] God says that he will sit and throne there forever and ever. They ask righteousness for their priest. God promised to clothe the priest with salvation which is a greater concept. The people ask that the saints might sing for joy and God promises that they will sing for joy forever.

This Psalm, it's just, it's just filled full of promises. It's just filled full of history. It's just filled full of hope. That's what they were singing. As you have a favorite song, this could have very likely been the very favorite song for many people in the New Testament as they would have been singing this Psalm.

So that was the what. Now here's the so what. In this glorious picture, these pilgrims are on their way to Jerusalem. They're singing of David wanting to build a temple. They're singing of David wanting to bring the ark in and then throw them in and these wonderful promises.

But here's the catch. Here's the twist. This Psalm is found in the fifth book of Psalms which means that even though these stories will go all the way back to the time of Solomon, there's no longer a Davidic king upon the throne.

And this is long before Jesus will come. So all this language about David's descendants being on the throne forever, being sung by pilgrims, but they do not have a Davidic king.

[12 : 55] And so what we have here is a people that will walk by faith and not by sight because they look to the promises of God in their life. There's two crises, two things that were called here, that Zion would not be forsaken in verse 13 and that David's heir would be upon the throne.

And here in other words, the psalmists, the people of God are singing and they have to sing by faith. They are singing this song by faith. And that may be exactly where you are at tonight.

You know the rich promises that God has made from His Word and you know the desires of your heart have been lifted up to Him in prayer, but you don't see it being fulfilled. The promises are not being fulfilled.

Your prayers are not being answered. You don't see your desires being realized. And so what do you have to do? You walk by faith. Can you imagine this enormous expression of faith?

It would have been for hundreds of years the children of Israel that sang this song while most of the people were in exile and there was no king of David on the throne. And Luke recounting the birth to Jesus, he quotes this psalm in Luke 169 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of the servant David that Jesus is the fulfillment.

[14 : 07] He is the king that will sit upon the throne. That now the song is being realized. Now let's sing that song again. Let's sing that song we always sung about when there was no throne, when we didn't have Jerusalem.

Let's sing it now because we know it. So in our few minutes remaining, I want to tell you this. Sing by faith. There's going to be times in your life that your singing is going to be stopped.

James 5.13 says, Is there any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any married? Let him sing songs. If you're married, sang songs. And if you're afflicted, pray.

Remember the proverb that says that if there's a person that is mourning, that is sad, that singing to them is like throwing a cold garment on them on a cold day or putting vinegar upon their teeth.

It's a singeth songs to a heavy harp. There's a time of affliction where you don't feel like you can sing. There's a time of suffering where you can't sing. And so you pray and you pray until you're able to sing again.

[15 : 10] Suffering will stop our singing. The singing also helps us in our suffering. Psalm 42. Deep calleth unto the deep at the noise of thy water spouts. All the waves and all thy billows are gone over.

Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime and in the night his songs shall be with me in my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, why hast thou forgotten me?

Why go I mourning? Because of the oppression of the enemy. Between the waves of God breaking over him on one side and the sense of abandonment on the other, there was a song in the night.

Singing should be part of our strategy in life. You know, as we pray for Grief Share, Stephen, Stephanie and the Sykes, I'm going to pray that in this room over here on Sunday nights when Grief Share happens that people that can't sing because of suffering will pray and that people that are praying are able to sing again.

It's part of strategy. What does Paul and Silas do? They're locked in a prison and they can't get out. What is the thing that they're going to do? They say, please open your song books to page 147.

[16 : 15] All right? They sung the song. It's good strategy in life. Singing is strategy. And then suffering will stop. Amen? Suffering will stop.

But singing will not stop. And singing about suffering will not stop. Suffering will not be forgotten because we will sing for all eternity, not about our suffering, but Christ.

Revelation chapter number 5, verses 9 and 10. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof. For Thou was slain and has redeemed us, God, by the blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation and has made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on this earth.

We will sing for all eternity. Suffering will stop, but we will sing about the suffering that Jesus did in our place. And so we're going to sing tonight. One last time before we leave, we're going to sing unto the Lord.

Psalm 147, verse 1 says, Praise you the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant and praise is comely. Two things, singing is pleasant and it is fitting for God's people.

[17 : 25] And sometimes you walk into this place and it's obvious. You're saying, I feel everything that's being said, I know completely what's being said, but sometimes you come and hear them and you feel like your life is clouded and that you're in a mystery and that you're between the waves that are coming into your life and you sang by faith.

And God loves to hear our joyful praise that we give to Him in times of clarity and He loves to hear our squeaky, broken voices when we're just singing the words because we trust Him.

Because our worship is not a response to how Jesus makes us feel. Our worship is a response to Jesus' worth regardless of how we feel. So these pilgrims are people that are singing a beautiful song but it's one that was just filled with promise.

And we are people today that have seen that Jesus Christ has come and that promise has been delivered. But we're living between the now and the not yet, right? There are still promises that are yet to be fulfilled and we are going to be pilgrims that are going to sing these songs with our hearts as filled with hope, trusting it as reality.

If He said it was going to happen, it is reality and we wait expectantly for that day. Will you stand with me as I pray through this psalm and then we will sing together.

[18 : 41] Heavenly Father, I pray tonight, Lord, remembering the afflictions of David, remembering his desire for the tabernacle and for all that you were to do and to build you a place to dwell.

Lord, this was their desire to go into a place and to do this, to have a king that would sit upon the throne and as these people trusted you and your promises, they sang a song and tonight, Father, I believe that I am probably surrounded by some brothers and sisters that are singing this song simply as an expression of faith.

May we be able to rejoice in your promises when we see them and when we're not sure how that would ever come to be true. We trust you, Lord. We sing tonight because of your worthiness.

In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.