

Welcome and Announcements

* Call to Worship.....Psalm 18:1-4, 49-50

* Invocation Psalm 124:8

* God's Greeting..... 1 Corinthians 1:3

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV)

* Opening Prayer

Almighty and Merciful God: This is the day and place when and where your people pray. Let us follow you to your sanctuary where your people gather so we may hear you, our God and King. And when we join your people in the place where we pray, may your grace and Holy Spirit fire our souls with a foretaste of that glorious assembly that keeps an eternal Sabbath above – the place where the everlasting praises of God and of the Lamb will grip and fill our raptured souls with joy unspeakable and glory to all. Through Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit, one true God, forever and ever. Amen.

* Song of Praise *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* #224:1-3

Reading of God's Law.....1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Prayer of Confession

Our merciful heavenly Father: Our sins increase over our head; they rise up to the heavens. To us belong shame because we have sinned against you. We ourselves know that we have sinned against heaven and before you, and are no more worthy to be called your children. When we confess and forsake our sins, you are gracious and merciful. Though heaven is your throne, and the earth your footstool, still you will look to the poor and humble who tremble at your word. You revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the repentant. You have said that if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Assurance of Pardon..... Psalm 18:27-28

Congregational Prayer

Almighty God and Father in Heaven: In Your fatherly goodness, You have adopted us in Christ and delight to hear our prayers, which we offer through Him who is our High Priest and Mediator.

We pray especially for Your benediction on Your holy gospel, that it may continue to be faithfully proclaimed throughout the world. Give fatherly attention to Your servants who suffer persecution in other nations for the sake of the gospel. We pray for your church here in our nation, for even here, your people are harassed and ridiculed and mocked.

We grieve over those who have lost their homes, animals and other properties because of the fires that are raging around us. We pray for the safety of our friends here who have been displaced from their homes. Give them hope, peace of mind, and comfort. We pray

that the authorities will allow them to go back to their places soon, so they may rebuild their lives in their own places. We also pray for the safety of all the firefighters and emergency personnel involved in putting out the fires, and we are thankful for them.

We pray also for those whom you have appointed to govern our nation: the President, Congress, the justices and judges, the military, law enforcement, firefighters, and others who serve and protect our communities. Give them wisdom and integrity, and a restraining fear of You to keep them from abusing authority and give them the knowledge that they stand under Your final judgment. May they remove every obstacle to the preaching of the gospel and divine worship, so that the kingdom of Christ may progress, and all anti-Christian power may be resisted.

We remember also all who suffer from physical dangers, temptation, doubts, illnesses of mind or body, or financial distress. Comfort all widows and be to them a Father and an elder Brother and their only hope. [C.J., Cecilia, Leo, Anita]

We bring to Your throne these prayers through Jesus Christ our Savior and Intercessor. Amen.

Reading of the Creed.....*Apostles' Creed (p 851)*

Offerings..... *General Fund & Building Fund***1 Corinthians 16:1-2**

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. (ESV)

* Song of Thanksgiving..... *God, Be Merciful to Me* **#51C:1, 5, 6**

Scripture Readings: **2 Samuel 22:1-7, 21-31, 44-49; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4**

Prayer for Illumination

Almighty and merciful God our Father in heaven: We give you thanks for revealing your will to us in your Holy Scriptures. Fill us now with your Holy Spirit so we may rightly understand, meditate upon, and obey your will in your Word as our forefather David did. Through Christ our Light, Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

King David: "The LORD is My Rock"

Scripture Readings: 2 Samuel 22:1-7; 21-31; 44-49; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

Rev. Nollie Malabuyo • September 4, 2022

Dear Congregation of Christ: Here are a couple of quotes from non-Christians. From Ruth Hurmence Green, *The Born Again Skeptic's Guide to the Bible*, 1979. "I studied every page of this book, and I didn't find enough love to fill a saltshaker. God is not love in the Bible; God is vengeance, from Alpha to Omega." From Josh Billings, 19th century American humor writer, "There is no revenge so complete as forgiveness." These are two opposite thinking about vengeance. The first is attacking God as a God only of vengeance. The second is a complete opposite of vengeance in forgiveness.

Vengeance is one of the thoughts that we will briefly discuss this Lord's Day as we study the life and times of King David who succeeded Saul to the throne of Israel. Last Sunday, we learned had successful military campaigns early in his reign, but he met his demise later because of disobedience to God's commandments. First, he disobeyed not to take any spoils from a military victory. Second, he offered sacrifices before a battle, violating God's law that only priests could offer sacrifices.

Therefore, God replaced him with a young man named David, the youngest of his father Jesse's eight sons, who was the shepherd in the family. Later, because of his musical ability, he was hired by King Saul himself to play music for him during his troubled moments. He soon rose in rank as the king's armor bearer. The most widely-known event in David's life was when he slew the Philistine giant Goliath with a slingshot. After that victory over the Philistines, David was hailed by the Israelites, "*Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands*" (1 Sam 18:7).

This did not sit well with King Saul. However, even with this jealousy, Saul still appointed David as the commander of Israel's army. But his jealousy became rage as he attempted to kill David with a spear. To appease David, Saul gave his daughter Michal to be David's wife. Michal and Jonathan rescued David from Saul's plots to murder him. Finally, David fled from the king's court and dwelt in desert places. Even then, Saul continued pursuing David to kill him. At one point, David had a chance to kill the king inside a cave, but he spared the king's life.

After he became king, David also had early successes. But when he committed adultery and murder, his reign experienced many difficulties as God punished him even after he repented of his sins. His first son with Bathsheba died. Another son raped his sister, and Absalom killed this violent brother. However, Absalom himself led a successful rebellion against him, deposing him. But David's throne was restored when Absalom was killed. Later, another son named Adonijah also led a failed rebellion against him. From within and without, David had many enemies. Through all these sufferings and sorrows, David was faithful to God.

So, this morning, we will briefly explore David's life and times in the theme, "**The LORD is My Rock,**" under three headings.

"I Call Upon the Lord, He heard My Voice" (2-7)

David wrote this song when he was in distress from his enemies, whether they are King Saul, the Philistines, those who want to betray him, and even his own men. They want to do him violence. So he calls upon the Lord "who is worthy to be praised" and who saved him from his enemies. The Lord is his rock, fortress and deliverer, refuge, shield, the horn of his salvation, and stronghold. All these attributes of God tells us that God has such unshakable power that David is assured that he could deliver him from all his enemies and all his sufferings. At times, he was near death, near the grave ("Sheol").

When lions and bears attacked his flock, his life was in danger. When he met the giant Goliath in combat, he could have easily been killed. When the king threw a javelin to kill him, he barely avoided death. When Saul pursued him in jealousy, he traveled from place to place, weary, hungry, and barely avoided being killed many times. When two of his sons, Absalom and Adonijah, rebelled against him, they wanted him dead. Therefore, David praises God for giving him strength and skills in battle (22:34-43).

When he sinned, he always repented and asked God for forgiveness. Many of us are familiar with the song of thanksgiving that we sung, "God, Be Merciful to Me." It is from Psalm 51, a solemn song of repentance after God condemned him for his adultery with Bathsheba and his first degree murder of her husband Uriah. He wrote, "*For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight*" (51:3-4a).

Through all these persecution, sufferings and sins, David trusted in the Lord. Yes, at times, like all of us, he went into deep despair and wrote psalms of lament. One of these in Psalm 13, where he begins, "*How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*" (Psa 13:1-2) But as soon as he sorrows over his plight, he remembers to trust God, saying at the end of the psalm, "*But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me*" (Psa 13:5-6).

For those of you who have been affected greatly by the current fires around us, trust in God that he will deliver you from this disaster. The Lord provides, whether by insurance or by financial help from others. Someone said, "It's only a house." And we also say, "It's only money." Easy to say when we're not in the same situation, but it is true and Biblical. David wrote in Psalm 52:7, "*See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!*" Our Lord also teaches us not to be anxious about tomorrow because our heavenly Father knows all our needs (Matt 6:31-34). And Paul exhorts those who have much not to be proud or to hope in riches, "*but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy*" (1 Tim 6:17).

"You Save a Humble People" (21-31)

After he pleaded to God to save him from his enemies, David received God's answer in verses 8-20 (which we did not read). How did God answer his prayer? God reminded him of his power over the mighty Egyptians when the Israelites escaped slavery in Egypt. God parted the waters in

the Red Sea and in the Jordan River so they could cross on dry ground. He protected his people from the daytime heat with a pillar of cloud and guided their way at night with a pillar of fire. David also remembered all of God's mighty works when his forefathers fought their enemies on the way to the Promised Land and during its conquest and settlement.

God rescued David because he delighted in him. In verses 21-31, David writes about his "righteousness," "cleanness of my hands," keeping "the ways of the Lord," and being "blameless." How could he say these things when he knew that he sinned against God many times? We read of those who are also described as being "blameless": Noah (Gen 6:9), Job (1:1) and Daniel (6:22). Does this mean that like our Lord, these are sinless people? No, because we know that all human beings are born sinners (Rom 3:23). And also because David, Noah, Job and Daniel lived lives of faithfulness and obedience to God's commandments. Their obedience was considered "blameless" they had faith in God even if they committed sins, demonstrated by their confession and repentance. Unbelievers confess their sins, but it is only remorse for what they have done against others but not against God.

Therefore, David praises the Lord because he is merciful, blameless, pure, perfect and true. Even though David knows he is a sinner, he strives to demonstrate these attributes of God by also being merciful, blameless, pure, perfect and true. God requires us to be so, as the Apostle Peter exhorts us, "*But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'*" (1 Pet 1:15-16; Lev 11:44). Paul also affirms that God chose us for salvation before the creation of the world to be "*holy and blameless before him*" (Eph 1:4).

David showed mercy and compassion even to his enemies. Twice, David spared King Saul's life when he had the chance, because he would not lift a hand against God's anointed king (2 Sam 24:26). And when Saul and his three sons died in battle, he mourned (2 Sam 1:11-27). He welcomed Abner his general back after Abner chose David over the self-declared king Ishbosheth. But when his other general, Joab, assassinated Abner, he mourned for him (2 Sam 3). He did not have to be kind to Jonathan's disabled son Mepiboseth, whom he adopted like his own son (2 Sam 9). He mourned his son Absalom's death, even when he rebelled against him and deposed him as king. He even pardoned those who participated in Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam 19).

In 2 Samuel 24, after all his military victories, he gave in to Satan's temptation to order a census of Israel's troops and men. This was a sin because of pride in his power and trusting in his own men and not in God. But after God sent a plague that killed 70,000 men in Israel, David repented of his sin. He offered a sacrifice for sin on an altar that he built in a threshing floor in Jerusalem, saying, "*I have sinned greatly in what I have done.*" This threshing floor became the site of the temple that his son Solomon would later build (2 Sam 24).

David must have remembered this disaster in Israel because of his pride. So he says of God, "*You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down*" (22:28). Do we show humility, mercy and kindness to our family, friends and neighbors? Serving them is humility. Forgiving others for offending you is mercy. Giving help to the fire victims is kindness.

"The God Who Gave Me Vengeance" (47-49)

Lastly, David again praises God as his Rock of salvation because he "gave me vengeance" (22:47) God used him to avenge God's violent enemies. He had victories over the Philistines, Moabites, Arameans, Edomites and Amalekites. So he declares that God "brought down peoples under me" (22:48). And recalling Saul, Absalom, and Adonijah, and others who betrayed him, he gives thanks to God, "*who brought me out from my enemies; you exalted me above those who rose against me; you delivered me from men of violence*" (22:49).

Vengeance is part of human nature. When we're offended, we want to strike back. This is what's happening in our nation today. There is great polarization, name-calling, and threats of violence against those who disagree with them. We see an absence of humility, mercy and kindness. We see no unity, only anarchy, chaos and lawlessness.

How then do we, as Christians, react to all of these evil things? David's words are our answer, "*the God who gave me vengeance.*" This does not mean that we ourselves must exact vengeance on our enemies. Remember that God is patient towards his enemies. Since Noah's flood, God has been patient for thousands of years. Yet, even in the case of his chosen nation Israel, his patience ran out and God poured down his wrathful vengeance against them. He even used wicked nations to punish his own people for their sins. Remember God's exhortation to Israel before they entered the promised land, "*Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly. For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants*" (Deut 32:5-36). Paul quotes these words, "*Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'*" (Rom 12:19). Let us leave it to God to avenge persecutions and martyrdoms against us. We might not see his vengeance in our lifetime, but it will surely come when God's patience runs out.

Dear brothers and sisters: In 1 Corinthians 10, we read that after the Israelites escaped from Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. Paul also says, "*and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ*" (10:3-4). The manna that God sent from heaven was a picture of "spiritual food." And the water that gushed from the rock in the desert was a picture of "spiritual drink." This is because the manna from heaven is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who was the Bread of heaven (John 6:32-35), whose broken body on the cross we celebrate with the Lord's Supper. And the rock in the desert that Moses struck for water was a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who was struck down to give us the living water of eternal life (John 4:14; 7:37).

The Lord was David's spiritual Rock. So David was a picture of his Son Jesus who patiently taught and rebuked the Pharisees and scribes who sought to kill him. Even on the cross, he was merciful to his enemies, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:34). Jesus the Son of God humbled himself as a human being to save us from sin, Satan and death. He willingly died on the cross to reconcile us with God who was our enemy. And because of David's faithfulness and obedience, God rewarded him with an eternal kingdom in his son Jesus, the Eternal King.

Prayer of Consecration

Dear Heavenly Father: We praise you for teaching us that Christ is our humble, merciful, kind and compassionate Savior, Lord and King. May we as your chosen people also show these virtues to our family, friends and even those who hate us. We long for that day when you will finally reward our faithfulness and obedience to you when your Son makes us perfectly holy in his eternal kingdom. Through Christ our Rock, Refuge and Redeemer. Amen.

* Song of Response *Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me*..... #452:1-4

* Benediction Numbers 6:24-26

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his face upon you and give you peace. (ESV)

* Doxology *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* #568