



Sacred practice of promise keeping

Psalm 132

By pastor Ken Keyte

Date: 27th August 2017

1

Psalm 132

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

- ¹ LORD, remember David
and all the times he didn't do what he wanted.
- ² LORD, he made a promise.
Mighty One of Jacob, he made a promise to you.
- ³ He said, "I won't enter my house
or go to bed.
- ⁴ I won't let my eyes sleep.
I won't close my eyelids
- ⁵ until I find a place for the LORD.
I want to build a house for the Mighty One of
Jacob."

Psalm 132

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

- ¹ LORD, remember David
and all the times he didn't do what he wanted.
- ² LORD, he made a promise.
Mighty One of Jacob, he made a promise to you.
- ³ He said, "I won't enter my house
or go to bed.
- ⁴ I won't let my eyes sleep.
I won't close my eyelids
- ⁵ until I find a place for the LORD.
I want to build a house for the Mighty One of Jacob."

2

Psalm 132

- ⁶ Here are the words we heard in Ephrathah.
We heard them again in the fields of Kiriath Jearim.
- ⁷ "Let us go to the LORD's house.
Let us worship at his feet. Let us say,
- ⁸ "LORD, rise up and come to your resting place.
Come in together with the ark. It's the sign of your
power.
- ⁹ May your priests put on godliness as if it were their
clothes.
May your faithful people sing for joy.'"

- ⁶ Here are the words we heard in Ephrathah.
We heard them again in the fields of Kiriath Jearim.
- ⁷ "Let us go to the LORD's house.
Let us worship at his feet. Let us say,
- ⁸ "LORD, rise up and come to your resting place.
Come in together with the ark. It's the sign of your
power.
- ⁹ May your priests put on godliness as if it were their
clothes.
May your faithful people sing for joy.'"

3

Psalm 132

- ¹⁰ In honor of your servant David,
don't turn your back on your anointed king.
- ¹¹ The LORD made a promise to David.
It is a firm promise that he will never break.
He said, "After you die,
I will place one of your own sons on your throne.
- ¹² If your sons keep my covenant
and the laws I teach them,
then their sons will sit
on your throne for ever and ever."

- ¹⁰ In honor of your servant David,
don't turn your back on your anointed king.

¹¹The LORD made a promise to David.

It is a firm promise that he will never break.

He said, "After you die,

I will place one of your own sons on your throne.

¹²If your sons keep my covenant

and the laws I teach them,

then their sons will sit

on your throne for ever and ever."

4

Psalm 132

¹³The LORD has chosen Zion.

That's the place where he wants to live.

¹⁴He has said, "This will be my resting place for ever and ever.

Here I will sit on my throne, because that's what I want.

¹⁵I will greatly bless Zion with everything it needs.

I will give plenty of food to the poor people living there.

¹⁶I will put salvation on its priests as if it were their clothes.

God's faithful people will always sing for joy.

¹³The LORD has chosen Zion.

That's the place where he wants to live.

¹⁴He has said, "This will be my resting place for ever and ever.

Here I will sit on my throne, because that's what I want.

¹⁵I will greatly bless Zion with everything it needs.

I will give plenty of food to the poor people living there.

¹⁶I will put salvation on its priests as if it were their clothes.

God's faithful people will always sing for joy.

5

Psalm 132

¹⁷"Here in Jerusalem I will raise up a mighty king from the family of David.

I will set up the lamp of David's kingdom for my anointed king.

Its flame will burn brightly forever.

¹⁸I will put shame on his enemies as if it were their clothes.

But he will wear on his head a shining crown."

¹⁷"Here in Jerusalem I will raise up a mighty king from the family of David.

I will set up the lamp of David's kingdom for my anointed king.

Its flame will burn brightly forever.

¹⁸I will put shame on his enemies as if it were their clothes.

But he will wear on his head a shining crown."

A quirk of my personality is that I get a lot of satisfaction from completing things.

Whether it's finally printing off my sermon ready to preach on Sunday, emailing off my monthly pastor's report to the elders, or mowing the last strip of the lawns, I get a kick out of finishing something.

You may remember that last year I did a preaching series on the Psalms of Ascent- which are the 15 psalms from 120 to 134 that were sung by the Hebrew pilgrims on their way to the annual worship festivals in Jerusalem.

Eugene Peterson uses their pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a metaphor of discipleship, of journeying towards God which he calls *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*- the title of a book he's written about these 15 psalm's of Ascent.

Well guess what! I've only preached on 13 out of the 15 Psalms of Ascent, so I've still got two more to do before I can have the satisfaction of completing the series on the Psalms of Ascent!

And with three preaching Sundays left for me before I finish up, I've just got time to complete all 15 psalms of Ascent before I go!

Each of these psalms *teach the pilgrims who read it and sing it* something important about the *sacred practices of growing closer to becoming the sort of person God intends us to be.*

Psalm 132 is about *the sacred practice of promise keeping* because it reminds us of *the promise King David made to God* and of the *promises God made for his pilgrims.*

Psalm 132 was written to *encourage all God's pilgrims to become promise keepers too!*

So let's take a look at *the promise King David made to God* that is recorded in this psalm.

Remember King David the Promise Keeper

6



Psalm 132: 1-9
Remember King David the promise keeper!

The *ark of the covenant* was a *symbol of the presence of God* among his people. It was made under the *supervision of Moses* and had *accompanied Israel from Mt Sinai (10 Commandments)*, all through their *40 years in the wilderness*, and was with them when the Israelites *conquered the Promised Land*, where it was *kept in Shiloh.*

But then the ark was *captured in a battle* with their *arch enemy the Philistines*, and paraded around the Philistine cities as a *war trophy* of their victory over the Israelites.

However *strange things* soon began happening in the cities where the ark was displayed. When they *placed the ark beside their Philistine god Dagon*, the next morning they found their god *minus its head and tipped over as if it was bowing before the ark!*

Then the Philistines began *breaking out in tumours.* *Terrified* by this they *sent the ark off to another Philistine city* where the *same thing* happened until *eventually* the Philistine leaders decided that for their *own health and safety* to *send it back to where it came from!*

Which is how the ark ended up in the *out-of-the way Israelite village of Kiriath-jearim*, where it was eventually *found by King David.* Verses 6-8 of the psalm sing about his find.

⁶ Here are the words we heard in Ephrathah.

We heard them again in the fields of Kiriath Jearim.

⁷ Let us go to the LORD's house.

Let us worship at his feet. Let us say,

⁸ LORD, rise up and come to your resting place.

Come in together with the ark. It's the sign of your power.

Discovering the ark in Kiriath-jearim is what *inspired David* to *promise God* that he *wouldn't enter go to his home or go to bed till he'd found a home for the ark.*

Then it would *once again* be the *symbol of God's presence and power among his people.*

As the pilgrims made their way up the *same dusty road* the ark had been carried up to Jerusalem, they *sang this psalm of ascent* and remembered this important event of their history.

So the *first half* of Psalm 132 *remembers King David* as a *promise keeper*, who *wouldn't let anything stop him from fulfilling the promise he'd made to God!*

I think in remembering King David the promise keeper, the psalm also encourages us to consider the promise keeping reliability of our political leaders that we soon will be voting for.

How are they doing when it comes to being a *promise keeper*?

In four weeks time *our votes* will determine New Zealand's *next government* for the next three years.

All of the major political parties have made promises about what they will do to make our nation good and great if they get into government.

But *can we trust them* to keep their promises?

I'm curious to find out *how much you trust the leaders* of our major political parties.

Do you trust them: *A LOT, A LITTLE or NOT AT ALL?*

Can I see a *show of hands* for how much you trust each of these political leaders as *promise keepers*: *A LOT, A LITTLE, Or NOT AT ALL?*

- Bill English (7)



- Jacinda Ardern (8)



- Winston Peters (9)



- James Shaw (10)



- Donald Trump (11)



- Kim Jong-un (12)



(Thankfully we don't have to vote for these last two!)

Back in biblical times they *didn't* vote for their leaders, *God decided* who would be the *King of Israel!* After *rejecting God's first appointment* (King Saul) because of his *failure* as a promise keeper, God selected *David* as King.

Although they *didn't* vote for their *King* back then, they could *pray for their King*, as in verse 10 of the psalm.

¹⁰In honor of your servant David, don't turn your back on your anointed king.

The reason given in the psalm for praying that God would *not reject David* as their king, was because he kept the promise he'd made to God to take the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, symbolically putting God at the centre of the nation. In other words King David had proven himself to be a *promise keeper for God!*

As you prepare to cast your votes for our political leaders in a few weeks time, I'd encourage you to *check out and compare* what they are *promising to do*.

You can use on line tools such as:

13

Check out what they promise

- ValueYourVote.nz (Family First)
- votecompass.tvnz.co.nz (TVNZ)
- Policy.thespinoff.co.nz

- Family First's VALUE YOUR VOTE;
- TVNZ's ONLINE VOTE COMPASS;
- and the THESPINOFF policy Ap.

These are designed to help you *compare what the political parties are promising* against your own views.

What they won't tell you, however, is whether you can trust them as promise keepers. That's up to you!

But I'd like to also encourage you to *pray for the upcoming elections and our political leaders and parties* that we *will elect a government full of godly promise keepers* who will work hard to *make our nation good and great!*

Trust God the promise keeper

14



But Psalm 132 *doesn't just remember King David* as a great promise keeper of the past, it also *looks to the greatest promise keeper of all!*

In the *second half* of the psalm it *forges a vision* of the future reality that's based upon *the promises God made to David* and to *everyone who becomes a pilgrim of God*.

The Lord promised David, that *provided his sons were promise keepers like he was*, then a son of David would *sit on the throne of Israel for ever*. (v11,12)

The Lord *also promised* that *Zion* (the holy city of Jerusalem) will become *God's eternal home* (v13,14).

The Lord *promises to bless her* with everything that's needed by those who live there, including the poor. to clothe her priests *with salvation*, and that everyone there will *sing forever with joy!* (v15,16)

The psalm explains that these promises will be fulfilled by *raising up a mighty King* from the family of David, who will be *revealed in glory* as *God's anointed one*, while all his enemies *will be put to shame*. (vs17,18)

From *our historical vantage point* we're able to recognise how these promises *will be* fulfilled by the *annointed descendant* of David, whom we know is *Jesus Christ the son of God!*

Yet while *the means* by which these promises will be fulfilled has been revealed to us in *Jesus*, yet *still* these promises are *yet to be fulfilled*. But since they've been made by the *most trustworthy promise keeper of all*, these promises are the *greatest source of hope* for us and for the *world!*

If we were to *rank Jesus* against the *trustworthiness of all the election candidates* we'll be voting for in a few weeks time. Jesus ranks *way above them all!*

You see *although* the promises of Psalm 132 are *yet to be fulfilled*, we already know *the means* by which they *will be fulfilled*. Through the *death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the anointed son of God!*

The ark of the covenant was the *Israelite's symbol of God's promise keeping presence* with his people.

The cross is our symbol of God's promise keeping presence till Jesus the Messiah returns and makes Zion his eternal home!

So *what does this mean for us pilgrims living in between* the arrival of the *anointed one*, and *his return* when *Zion* will become the *happy home* of all his pilgrims?

Two weeks ago Raewyn and I dropped Ashley our 16 year old daughter off with our friends in Santa Rosa California where she will go to High School for the next 5 months. This is the fulfillment of a dream she first told us about last year.

But the path to enabling her to get there has been a long and complicated one because although we have friends in California who are very happy for Ashley to live with them there, since she isn't a citizen a US citizen she has to have a special visa to go to school there.

After lots of investigation and false leads, I found out that the only way Ashley could stay with our friends and go to High School there was by going through an authorised International Cultural Exchange organisation (such as AFICE) who are able to issue the official documentation necessary for getting a J1 Visa.

Before she could get this Ashley had to sign a list of promises and conditions she would keep in order to be granted a cultural exchange student visa.

One of the promises she made was this that she would maintain adequate grades in all her subjects, otherwise she could be sent home.

Ashley's a bit nervous about that one! Especially when it came to her first test last week in US history which she's never studied before! She got 92% and got a higher mark than quite a few of her US classmates!

Nevertheless she probably still feels a bit nervous about passing all her exams while she's there!

It would be a *very precarious state to be in* wouldn't it, if our *eligibility* to reside with Jesus in Zion upon his return was dependent upon *keeping our promises to love God and love our neighbour* like the Bible tells us to.

We might be *eligible one day* and *not* the next depending on how well we've done at this.

Which is *why* Jesus the anointed one came!
He came to be *the means* by which *our* promises to God are kept by Jesus, on our behalf.
Without which we'd soon be *ineligible* to enter the holy city of God.

Does that then mean we *don't need to bother about keeping our promises to God? Of course not!*
Psalm 132's example of *King David the promise keeper*, serves as an example for us *to do the same!*
And with the help of the Holy Spirit, *like David* we can become *godly promise keepers too!*

I want to remind you of some promises you *either will have made or may need to make as promise keeping pilgrims* of Jesus.

- *It starts with baptism.* Getting baptised is both a *visual and verbal promise* we make to become a *pilgrim of Jesus* for the rest of our life.
Have you made that promise?
With the help of the Holy Spirit *are you keeping your promise to stay on pilgrimage with Jesus to God?*
- *Church membership* is a promise we make to *serve Jesus through our local church* and to *serve each other* so that our church can be an *effective representation of Jesus to the world.*
Have you made that promise?
With the help of the Holy Spirit *are you keeping that promise to be a servant of Jesus through this church?*

- *Marriage* is a promise that's made to God and to our spouse. To love and to care for each other till death do us part.
How are you doing with that?
- In a few Sundays time, *Sjaan Rounds will be commissioned as the Children's pastor* of our church.
At a *commissioning service* (as for all our pastors) the pastor makes a promise to *serve Jesus and to serve the church in the position they've been called to.*
And *the church* makes a promise to *care for and support the pastor* so they can effectively pastor the church.
I hope you will *keep that promise for Sjaan and for all the pastors of our church!*

Psalm 132 encourages us to *remember King David the promise keeper* and to *pray we will elect godly promise keepers* into government who will make our *nation good and great!*
Psalm 132 inspires us to *trust God the great promise keeper*, that we may become *godly promise keepers too!*