

Sermon followed by Service

July 3, 2022

1 Samuel 24

Fireworks! Hotdogs! Hamburgers! Why? We're celebrating the Fourth of July, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, celebrating how America stood up to the King of England - "We're not going to take it!" Those aren't the exact words for the Declaration of Independence, are they? The writers of the Declaration didn't want to sound like a bunch of bad boy "Twisted Sister" teenagers, so they dressed up their Declaration with some God-talk, something more like this: "The Creator says: 'We don't have to take it anymore.'" That was July 4, 1776. Now we celebrate the Fourth of July as the birthday of our country. We celebrate with fireworks, hamburgers, hotdogs. And something else. We celebrate with a prayer of thanks and a prayer for blessing, don't we?

How about December 23, 1783? Or March 4, 1797? What's special about those dates? On December 23, 1783, after the British surrendered and signed the Treaty of Paris, George Washington stepped down and resigned as Commander of the Continental Army. And on March 4, 1797, after serving two terms as president, again Washington stepped down, and passed the power of the presidency to John Adams. What if George Washington wasn't willing to step down? What kind of despot-country would we have then?

Last week, we heard how David stepped in, stepped up, and stood up to Goliath. We finished the service singing "*Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus.*" This week a better fit might be: "Stand Down, Stand Down for Jesus." Why? Let's pick it up from where we left off, or just before.

Goliath is standing tall, daring the armies of Israel to come out and fight him. Israel is standing down, stuck and cowering. Until David steps up and stands up to Goliath. But David did more than just stand up to Goliath. He called on the name of the Lord, let out a shout - **“The battle belongs to the LORD”** and ran toward Goliath. He slung his sling, and, by the power of God, stoned Goliath in the forehead, dropping him dead. Taking Goliath’s sword and cutting off the giant’s head, David cleared the way for Israel to chase the Philistines back to their homes.

David the shepherd boy was now a national hero. The women sang out: **“Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.”** King Saul heard those cheers for David, and he didn’t like it. Jealous and paranoid, with an evil spirit inside him, Saul tried to send David to death on the battlefield. Jealous and angry, in a jealous rage, Saul chucked spears at David time and again. Each time, David was able to escape. Finally, David went on the run. He didn’t dare stay any one place too long. Saul had sent his army out after David, to find David, and kill David. On the run, hiding out, others soon joined David - a collection of outlaws, people on the run from bill collectors, and malcontents.

At the time of our lesson, David and his outlaw, malcontent army were hiding out at Engedi - a wilderness area of mountains and hills, cliffs and caves, palm trees and water. Saul and his special mission army were hunting David down. Saul had David outnumbered 3000 to 600, 5 to 1. But Saul didn’t know where David was. If Saul went along this side of a mountain, David hid on the other side. And then Saul had a problem. They must have left the royal portolet back at camp. So Saul goes into a cave to relieve himself. The same cave where David and his men were hiding.

Imagine you're David or one of his men deep in the cave. At first, your heart is pounding: "Yikes! We're caught." But Saul doesn't see you, so now your heart is pounding in a different way: "Now we've got him." You see Saul indisposed. You see your opportunity to be rid of the tyrant who is hunting you down. You see your opportunity to be free. You see your opportunity to stand up for yourself and for your people and to get some form of justice. And what goes through your mind? "It would be self defense; after all, he's trying to kill us." "And not just self defense, it would be our national duty. The King is mentally unstable, mentally unfit for office. It's time for Amendment 25. The nation needs to be saved from his ranting, raging lunacy."

But David's men didn't play the self-defense card; they didn't play the greater-good justice card. Instead they played the God-card. They said: "God said, 'I will give you your enemy into your hands to do with as you see fit.'" Oh, God-talk can sound so good when it's what we want to hear. Add God's name to what we want to say, add God's name to what we want to hear - it sounds so good, doesn't it? But this "god-talk" like so much "god-talk" doesn't seem to be from God. If God had really said what David's men said God said, we wouldn't have the rest of our lesson. If God had really said that he would hand Saul into David's hands, David, a man of God on a mission from God, would have seen what God gave him to do and Saul would be have done.

Enough of the "what-ifs." Back to the cave. David hears his men and their "god-talk." He gets up, sneaks up, and stands down. He gets up, sneaks up, and instead of plunging his knife, instead of slicing the throat of the man who was out to kill him, David cuts off a corner of Saul's robe. Why? Listen to David's conscience. **David said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing**

to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD." Even though David didn't slice or stab Saul, even though he didn't cut or kill Saul, David's conscience was cut and hit hard. Even though Saul had been out to kill him, even though Saul had cheated him and chased him out of his home, even though Saul was evil and demonic, even though God had already promised David that he David would replace Saul as king - David saw Saul as the Lord's anointed and he didn't see it as his place to lift his hand, or even his voice, against Saul. Lifting his hand against the Lord's anointed authority would be lifting his hand against God himself. Disrespecting the authority God put in place would be disrespecting God himself. And David would not do that.

I have. I've disrespected and disobeyed authorities that God has put in place. What does that mean? I've disrespected and disobeyed God. I'm not the only one here guilty of that shame and crime against God, am I? We have our excuses; we have our ways to shift blame; we might even sprinkle some god-talk onto our excuses and blaming. But what do we need to know? Disrespecting and disobeying God, blaming others and excusing self, sprinkling god-talk over it all - that's not God's way to blessing; that's what got Saul rejected by God.

Let me tell you about a different King. I won't say that he doesn't get angry when people cross him. I won't say that he doesn't get jealous when people leave him. He does. But this King, instead of going on a mission to wipe out the competition, instead of setting out to strike down and strike out those who cross him ... he came here on a mission to be crossed for the ways we have crossed God. He came here on a mission to wipe out and wipe away every charge, every record, every bit of guilt that God could have against you. He came to be the King who says: "I love you. Don't be afraid: I forgive

you. Don't worry: I've got you. Come with me: I've got a place for you with me forever." You know that King; he's David's greater Lord, our Lord and Savior Jesus.

Sounds good, doesn't it? Sometimes we think that we can make that good news better by doing our thing our way instead of doing God's thing God's way. Like in our lesson. David's fighting men thought they had a way David could have made life so much better, so much easier for all of them. It would have been easy. It would have seemed right. So, how could David let such an opportunity go? How could David, why would David stand down as he did? David trusted in the Lord. God had promised. And David trusted God to work out his promises. He didn't need to take things into his own hands. David knew - God can do and God will do whatever it takes to keep his promises.

Not just for David, but even for us. We don't need to think that we can do better than God. God doesn't need us to step out of our lane into his lane. God doesn't need us to play God. No matter who or how many people fill our ears with made-up god-talk, calling us to do wrong to make things right for God, God doesn't need that. Even when the powers that be are godless and ungodly, God doesn't need us to return evil for evil. Instead we answer evil with respect, godly respect. Like David. David knew his place; he knew Saul's place; he knew God's place; and he knew God could do and God would do whatever needed to be done to keep his promise and make things right. That's why David could stand up before Goliath, and stand down before Saul - David knew he was standing with God! Amen.

July 2 & 3, 2022

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we want what we want from government (and too often principles take a back seat to politics). And when government is wrong (or doesn't do what we want), we declare our right to rise up and reject government.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see David on the brink of saving himself from murderous government injustice. And what does David do? He stands down. The victim shows an undeserved respect to his unjust persecutor. What lessons might we learn?

OPENING HYMN

"Before You, Lord We Bow"

Hymn 775

Before you, Lord, we bow, our God who reigns above
and rules the world below in boundless pow'r and love.
Our thanks we bring in joy and praise,
our hearts we raise to you, our King!

The nation you have blessed may well your love declare,
from foes and fears at rest, protected by your care.
For this bright day, for this fair land —
gifts of your hand — our thanks we pay.

May ev'ry mountain height, each vale and forest green,
shine in your Word's pure light and its rich fruits be seen!
May ev'ry tongue be tuned to praise
and join to raise a grateful song.

Earth, hear your maker's voice, your great Redeemer own;
believe, obey, rejoice, and worship him alone.
Cast down your pride, your sin deplore,
and bow before the Crucified.

And when in pow'r he comes, oh, may our native land
from all its rending tombs send forth a glorious band,
a countless throng, with joy to sing
to heav'ns high King, salvation's song!

INVOCATION

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

+ CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION +

M: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

+ PRAYER AND PRAISE +

LORD, HAVE MERCY

M: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:

C: **Amen.**

M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

HYMN

"O Lord, Our Lord"

Hymn 939

Refrain

O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.

Al-might-y God, mer-ci-ful Fa - ther, you crown our life

with your love. You take a-way our sin; you com-fort our spir-it;

you make us pure and ho-ly in your sight. You did not spare your

Refrain

on - ly Son, but gave him up for us all. O Lord, our Lord,

how glo - rious is your name in all the earth. O Son of
 God, e - ter - nal Word of the Fa - ther, you came to live with us;
 you made your Fa - ther known; you washed us from our sins in
 your own blood. You are the King of glo - ry; you are the Lord!

Refrain
 O Lord, our Lord, how glo - rious is your name in all the earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord, keep this nation under your care. Bless the leaders of our land that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to the other nations of the earth. Help us elect trustworthy leaders, contribute to wise decisions for the general welfare, and serve you faithfully in our generation to the honor of your holy name; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 24

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

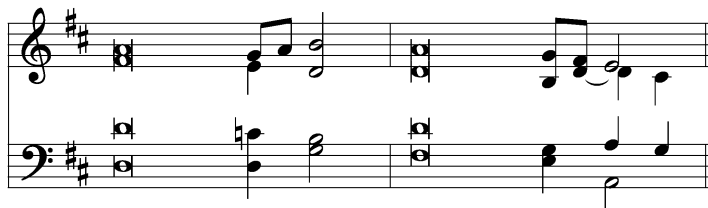
Psalm 18C

Refrain



The LORD my God will turn my dark-ness in - to light.

Tone



The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my de- / liverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take / refuge.

In my distress I called / to the LORD;

I cried to my / God for help.

From his temple he / heard my voice;

my cry came before him, in- / to his ears. *Refrain*

He reached down from on high and took / hold of me;
he drew me out of deep / waters.

He rescued me from my powerful / enemy,
from my foes, who were too / strong for me.

They confronted me in the day of my dis- / aster,
but the LORD was / my support.

He brought me out into a / spacious place;

he rescued me because he delighted / in me. *Refrain*

You, LORD, keep my lamp / burning;
my God turns my darkness / into light.

With your help I can advance a- / gainst a troop;
with my God I can / scale a wall.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,**

**as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain**

SECOND READING

1 Peter 2:13–17

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Proverbs 14:34

Alleluia. Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 22:15–22

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”

But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

Hymn 770

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your pow’r;
crown your ancient Church’s story, bring its bud to glorious flow’r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us scorn the Christ, assail his ways.
From the fears that long have bound us free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

SERMON

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Almighty God, we acknowledge with thanks that all we have and enjoy is a gift from your gracious hand. We come before you today in heartfelt appreciation for our nation and its people.

We thank you for enabling us to worship you in freedom and to serve you without fear.

You have enriched us with the bounties of farm and factory, the beauty of forest and mountain, and the marvels of medicine and science.

For all these blessings, we praise and glorify you.

Look with favor upon our nation and preserve our cherished liberties. Enable our leaders to govern with wisdom, honesty, courage, and justice. Protect those who serve in the armed forces and those who maintain peace and safety in our communities.

Give us willingness to obey our nation's laws and to work for the common good.

Keep our financial institutions secure and our economy strong. Bless our fields that they may produce abundant harvests. Guard us from calamities of nature and accident and spare our land from the ravages of disease and epidemic.

Teach us not to worry but to cast all our cares on you.

Strengthen the homes of our nation. By your Spirit lead husbands and wives to love each other, parents to nurture their children, young adults to assume responsibility, and children to show respect.

Lead the citizens of our land to honor the useful foundations of society.

Care for those who are sick or have been injured. Calm those who are disappointed and depressed. [Especially bless... *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Provide guidance to those who care for people in trouble or in need.

Lead us to provide help when we can and to pray at all times.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

To you, O Lord, we bring our thanks and our requests.

Hear our prayers for Jesus' sake. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Individually packaged wafers are gluten-free.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He sends the Holy Spirit to testify that we are his children and to strengthen us when we are weak.

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *Sanctus*

C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.
You are my God and I will ex - alt you.
I will give you thanks for you have be - come my sal -
va - tion. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

The image shows a musical score for the Sanctus. It consists of six staves of music in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts with 'C:'. The lyrics are: 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.' The second staff: 'The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.' The third staff: 'You are my God and I will ex - alt you.' The fourth staff: 'I will give you thanks for you have be - come my sal -'. The fifth staff: 'va - tion. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.' The sixth staff: 'The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.' The music is written in a simple, clear style with a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, and rests.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei*

C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Eternal Father, Strong to Save"

Hymn 805

Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.

O Christ, the Lord of hill and plain o'er which our traffic runs amain,
By mountain pass or valley low, wherever, Lord, they people go,
Protect them by thy guarding hand from ev'ry peril on the land.

O Spirit, whom the Father sent to spread abroad the firmament,
O Wind of heaven, by thy might save all who dare the eagle's flight,
And keep them by thy watchful care from ev'ry peril in the air.

O Trinity of love and pow'r, our people shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe, protect them wheresoe'er they go;
Thus evermore shall rise to thee glad praise from air and land and sea.

CLOSING PRAYER

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

"God Bless Our Native Land"

Hymn 774

God bless our native land; firm may she ever stand thro' storm and night!
When the wild tempests rave, Ruler of wind and wave,
do thou our country save by thy great might.

For her our prayers shall rise to God above the skies; on him we wait.
Thou who art ever nigh, guarding with watchful eye,
to thee aloud we cry: God save the state!

OFFERING

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