

Church “Who knows? The Lord May Be Gracious To Me.”

27.June.2021

Lac du Flambeau

We look this morning at David...

not as a king,  
not as a warrior,  
not as a psalmist,  
but as a father.

Born to him and Bathsheba – who is Uriah’s wife, not David’s -  
is a son...

A son who will bear the judgment of God.  
As son born in adultery  
who is condemned by God to die.

When Nathan informs David of God’s judgment,  
David goes to the temple and pleads with God.  
David fasts.  
David prostrates himself in prayer  
all day and all night for 7 days.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> day the child dies.

And David washes himself,  
dresses himself,  
eats  
and resumes his regular activities,  
including returning to the temple to worship God.

His counselors are amazed,  
and wonder why this sudden turn of attitude.

Because, David says, while my son was alive,  
there was a chance that God might change his mind.

*“Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me.”*

2

From where did David get his understanding of God?

Perhaps from his days as a shepherd.

Part of a shepherd's responsibility  
is to protect the sheep from bears.

When such a bear would approach,  
David would take his trust sling shot,  
put a stone in the pouch,  
and try to kill the bear.

Each time, David knew there were two possible outcomes:

1. He would kill the bear; or
2. The bear would kill him.

And so quietly and quickly he would approach the animal  
saying, no doubt, a prayer to God...  
asking for success.

And saying to himself:

*"Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me."*

And each time,  
God was gracious...  
and the animal died, not David.

3

Another part of a shepherd's responsibility  
is to protect the sheep from lions.

When such a lion would approach,  
David would take his trust sling shot,  
put a stone in the pouch,  
and try to kill the lion.

Each time, David knew there were two possible outcomes:

1. He would kill the lion; or
2. The lion would kill him.

And so quietly and quickly he would approach the animal  
saying, no doubt, a prayer to God...  
asking for success.

And saying to himself:

*"Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me."*

And each time,  
God was gracious...  
and the animal died, not David.

4

Perhaps David's theology comes from his days as a warrior.

We all know the most famous story...

The Israelites were at war with the Philistines,  
and the Philistines had a giant of a warrior  
named Goliath.

Goliath had challenged the Israelites to send out their best warrior,  
to do battle one on one.

If the Israelite won, the Philistines would leave.  
If Goliath won, the Israelites would have to leave.

But Goliath was so big – 9 feet tall -  
and so strong  
and so fearsome,  
that no Israelite was brave enough to challenge him.

Until David comes along.

David was just a kid.  
He had been sent to the front lines  
to bring food to his brothers...  
not to get into the fight.

But when he heard the challenge of Goliath,

and saw the fear of the Israelites,  
he volunteered.

Thinking, no doubt:

*“Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me.”*

God had been gracious when David faced the bears,  
God had been gracious when he faced the lions,  
maybe God would be gracious now,  
when he would face the giant.

5

(If this were football season...

I would need to interrupt the story  
and mention that maybe David could defeat the bears,  
the lions and the giants...but not the Packers.)

King Saul wanted David to wear his royal armor,  
and carry the royal sword.

But David was too small to wear such heavy protection.

And so he went forth to face Goliath  
with nothing but his trusty sling shot...

And no doubt saying his prayer to God,  
hoping that God might be gracious.

And God was gracious,  
God protected David;  
God was with David.

And David kills Goliath.

6

So now we arrive at today's story.

Wherein David has been told that his son will die.

And so he goes forth to the Lord  
and begs for his son's life.

*"Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me."*

God was gracious when David faced the lions.  
God was gracious when David faced the bears.  
God was gracious when David faced the giant.

Maybe, just maybe. One more time  
God will be gracious.

But this time God is not gracious  
and David must go on with life  
without his son.

There are times in our lives when we need God to be gracious.

The medical report is not very promising...  
the cancer has metastasized to the bone...  
the surgery is too risky considering the patient's overall health  
the odds of his regaining anything close to normal,  
neurological functioning are very low.

Not much reason to be hopeful.  
Not much reason to be optimistic.

But...

*"Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me."*

7

The economy is not in good shape...  
we will be closing this plant,  
and all the workers will be laid off.  
A European company has bought the plant,  
and will not honor the retirees' benefits package.  
With the fall of the stock market,  
I am afraid your 401(K) is now a 201(K).

Not much reason to be hopeful.  
Not much reason to be optimistic.

But...

*"Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me."*

Your wife's attorney says there is nothing to negotiate...

The DA says there is not enough evidence to prosecute  
the man who assaulted your daughter.

The judge says your son is lucky he will only spend 5 years in prison  
for committing the homicide while intoxicated.

Not much reason to be hopeful.

Not much reason to be optimistic.

But...

*"Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me."*

8

There are many things that can, and sometimes do, happen to us in life.

That can give us little reason to hope,

That give us little reason to feel optimistic.

That give us little reason to want to go on with life.

But in the midst of our tragedies,

we meet our God,

whom we have met before.



The God who was gracious to David  
when he was struggling with wild animals,  
when he was struggling with giants.

When we come before this God  
with prayer and fasting,  
with tears  
and falling on our needs...

we may get the answer we seek.

*“Who knows – the Lord may be gracious to me.”*

Amen.