

“¹Living in Peace and Faithfulness”

Psalm 85:8-13

Introduction

In this postmodern world of ours, it's a tremendous achievement to be known far and wide simply by your first name. In order to pull that off, you have to be incredibly successful at your craft over an extended period of time. For example, when I say **Beyoncé**, everyone knows I'm talking about the Grammy-winning singer, fashionista, trendsetting dancer, clothing designer, and occasional actress. When I say **Jordan**, everyone knows I'm talking about Michael Jordan – not the country of Jordan. Michael Jordan is quite possibly the greatest basketball player ever; a first ballot NBA Hall of Famer with six world championships and countless legendary moments and gravity-defying moves on the hardwood. Or if I say, **Elvis**, everyone knows I'm talking about Elvis Presley – the late, great American singer, musician, and movie star. His many, many fans still refer to him as either “the King of Rock & Roll” or simply “the King.”

Those are all iconic figures of late 20th and early 21st Century culture. But **David** is an iconic figure of the Old Testament of the Holy Bible. Whenever we hear the name David, we think about David as a young shepherd boy facing and defeating the enormous Philistine appropriately named Goliath with only a rock and a slingshot. We recall David as the son of Jesse; and the father of Solomon. Or we think about David as the author of most of the Psalms; second king of ancient Israel; poet and prayer warrior.

Although King David is acknowledged as the author of the vast majority of the Psalms, the 85th Psalm is credited as being written by the sons of Korah. Korah was the nephew of Moses.

Today's homiletical question – to me – is as timely as it is timeless. What can we learn from the Israelites known as **the sons of Korah**? *What clarity can they*

offer from well over 2000 years ago that is relatable to our lives right now in terms of peace and faithfulness?

On today, the Second Sunday of Advent – as well as the feast day of St. Nicholas – please allow me to raise two points for **Christ Church Towanda** about the importance of living **peaceful** and **faithful** lives for God’s glory this morning.

Point 1: The sons of Korah adore peace.

Verse 8 of the 85th Psalm reads thusly:

“Let me hear what the God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people.”

Psalms are songs of thanksgiving, praise, and even lamentations offered up to the Lord. The sons of Korah were correct about the utter importance of peace as a practice. Some biblical scholars believe that the prophet Samuel was himself a descendant of Korah. Peace was at least as important **for people** in the ancient Mediterranean world as it is **for us** in the postmodern world.

Peace is generally defined as “freedom from disturbance” or “a state or period in which there is no war.”

Think for a moment about postmodern life. The wars currently being fought serve as a stark reminder of what happens in the absence of peace. Peace is something each and every one of us wants and needs; but in times such as these can be difficult to find. Doesn’t it seem like there always one more ZOOM meeting to attend, one more errand to run, one more phone call to make, one more bill to pay, or perhaps one more assignment at work to successfully resolve? All those situations create stress; and stress is the enemy of peace.

The sons of Korah knew from their own experiences just how vital peace is.

As a matter of Christian common sense, we cannot give to others what we don’t possess first ourselves.

Ours is a God of peace. This planet is sorely in need of peace being freely exchanged between persons, between groups, and between nations. Peace facilitates love, joy, and unity. Truly, there can be no **friendship, fellowship,**

stewardship, scholarship, or discipleship without peace.

Which brings me to...

Point 2: The sons of Korah promote faithfulness.

Verses 10, 11, and 13 of the 85th Psalm instruct us this way:

“Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.”

The sons of Korah speak to us as treasured members of the beloved community.

This 85th Psalm is traditionally popular. It is featured in both liturgies and hymns within the Anglican, Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant Churches.

Thanks be to God that sometimes, something good can come from something bad.

Chapter 16 of the book of Numbers contains the story of the Israelite named Korah. He led a revolt against Moses’ leadership of the Israelites – which angered God. As a direct result, Korah and those who followed him perished when God caused a chasm in the earth that swallowed them up. Despite this event, the children of Korah survived – and in time, they actually thrived. In fact, Psalms 42, 44 through 49, 84, 85, 87, and 88 were written by them. They came to be called the Korah-ites – and were known for both their singing ability and their devout faithfulness to God.

Faithfulness is generally defined as “the concept of being unfailingly loyal to someone or something; regardless of extenuating circumstances.”

God is so worthy of both our praise and our faithfulness. Since we live with a hope that the world didn’t give us – and the world cannot take away from us – we should live our lives in perfect submission to God. Our faithfulness to our Heavenly Father **can and will** power us past our own trials, tribulations, and temptations if we can just **hang on** and **hang in there**.

Conclusion⁴

As we continue in this season of Advent, let us remain mindful of its three important components: [1] **waiting** as we prepare to remember the Incarnation – the First Coming of Jesus; [2] **waiting** as we prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus – when all will be made complete; and [3] **waiting** as we prepare for Christ coming to our hearts, minds, relationships, and friendships every single day.

The sons of Korah remind us of this time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas – and the triumphant return of Christ Jesus at the Second Coming.

In conclusion, never forget that God knows **you by your first name**. How could he not? You are most precious in his sight. God fearfully and wonderfully created you in his own Most High and Most Holy image. He knows the exact number of hairs on your head. God has placed within you all the gifts and tools required for you to go forth and achieve great things. So as you watch and wait for Christ Jesus' return, also watch and wait for opportunities to extend peace. Watch and wait and prepare for opportunities to exhibit faithfulness. Continue living in the hope that comes from loving, relying upon, and serving the one, true, triune God.
Amen.