

Songs for the Journey of Faith

Week One:

Psalm 145:8–14: The Lord Who Lifts the Weighed Down

When God's Character Becomes Our Hope

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, open our hearts to Your Word today. Remind us that You see us, You love us, and through Jesus Christ, You lift us when we cannot stand on our own. Strengthen our faith through Your Holy Spirit and send us into the world as witnesses of Your compassion. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Good morning, Saints of Advent.

Today we begin a new sermon series titled **Songs for the Journey of Faith**. Throughout July we will journey through the Psalms. These sacred songs have strengthened God's people for thousands of years through seasons of joy and sorrow, victory and defeat, celebration and grief. My prayer is that they will strengthen us as well.

Every journey has a starting point.

David begins our journey by inviting us not to look at ourselves first—but to look at God.

Before David tells us what God does, he tells us who God is.

And that changes everything.

A Lesson from the Hospital

One of the greatest lessons I have learned through my hospital ministry is this: **the people who appear the strongest are not always the ones carrying the lightest load.**

Almost every day I ask patients, "How are you today?"

Most smile and reply, "I'm okay," or, "I'm doing fine."

Sometimes that is true.

But sometimes, if I simply pull up a chair and stay a little longer, the conversation changes.

Someone quietly says, "Chaplain, I'm scared."

Another says, "I'm worried about my family."

Someone else whispers, "I'm just tired."

I've learned that many of life's heaviest burdens are invisible. People often carry them quietly because they don't want to burden anyone else.

Perhaps some of us came to worship this morning carrying one of those invisible burdens.

If so, today's Psalm is for us.

The Context of Psalm 145

Psalm 145 is the last psalm in Scripture attributed to King David. It is not written from one particular crisis but from the wisdom of a lifetime spent walking with God.

David knew victory.

He knew failure.

He knew betrayal.

He knew grief.

He knew fear.

He knew waiting.

Looking back over all those experiences, David reached one unshakable conclusion:

God has always remained faithful.

So David begins, not by describing his problems, but by proclaiming God's character.

"The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."

When we look back over our own lives, I believe many of us can say the same.

That is where faith begins.

God Sees the Burdened

David first invites us to look at God's heart.

"The Lord is gracious... merciful... good to all."

These are not qualities God shows only once in a while.

They are who He is.

Throughout Scripture, God sees what others overlook.

He saw Hagar in the wilderness.

He saw David when everyone overlooked the youngest son.

He saw blind Bartimaeus while others tried to silence him.

And He sees every burden we carry.

Perhaps no one knows the worry you've been carrying.

Perhaps no one knows your grief, your tears, or the questions you've been asking in the quiet of your heart.

But God does.

You have never been invisible to Him.

God Lifts the Weighed Down

David continues,

"The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down."

Notice what David says.

Not the successful.

Not the strongest.

Not those who have everything together.

Those who are falling.

Those who are struggling.

Those who are longing for hope.

That is exactly what we see in Jesus.

He reached for Peter when he began to sink.

He welcomed those carrying heavy burdens.

He touched the sick.

He comforted the brokenhearted.

Then He gave this invitation:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

At the cross, Jesus carried the greatest burden of all—our sin, our guilt, and our death.

Through His resurrection He declared that sin and death would no longer have the final word.

Our hope is not found in our strength.

Our hope is found in His grace.

The Lifted Become Lifters

God never lifts us only for ourselves.

He lifts us so that we may lift others.

Think about someone who encouraged you during a difficult season.

They may not have solved your problem.

They simply showed up.

Sometimes the greatest ministry is simply being present.

That is what the Church is called to be.

A place where burdened people discover hope.

A place where strangers become family.

A place where Christ's compassion is visible.

Walking the Psalm This Week

This week, begin every morning with one simple prayer:

"Lord, show me one person carrying an invisible burden today."

Then act: Make the phone call. Send the text. Visit someone. Listen without rushing. Pray with them.

And whenever you have the opportunity, **be a rainbow in someone's clouds**—a reminder that after every storm, God's hope still shines.

Conclusion

Saints of Advent, as you leave today, your circumstances may not change overnight.

The doctor's appointment may still be waiting.

The unanswered questions may still remain.

But leave remembering something greater than your circumstances.

Remember your God.

The God David worshiped.

The God revealed perfectly in Jesus Christ.

The God who sees you.

The God who lifts you.

The God who promises never to leave you nor forsake you.

And because He has lifted you, go and lift someone else.

May Advent Lutheran Church always be known as a place where burdened people find hope, where broken hearts experience compassion, and where every person leaves knowing they have been seen by God.

Next Sunday, our journey continues with Psalm 65 as we discover **The God Who Provides Abundantly**. The God who lifts us is also the God who faithfully provides all that we need. Thanks be to God. Amen.