

The Sure Mercies of David

(II Samuel 23:1-5)

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. Introduction: Today we will be considering the 1st 5 verses of II Samuel 23 in a message Iøve titled "The Sure Mercies of David," which is another term for the everlasting covenant as it is so called in verse 5 of today's text. And this covenant is appropriately referred to by many as the everlasting covenant of grace (for it speaks of God's purpose and of his having obligated Himself to save sinners by grace ó I.e., based upon nothing done by in or through the sinner, but rather accomplished by Christ for all of the objects of God's mercy and grace.

II. General comments about God's primary covenants as they relate to the eternal destiny of all:

A. There are 2 primary covenants (covenant of works / covenant of grace) ó primary, because these are the 2 covenants upon which God ultimately deals with all men in an eternal way. That is these 2 covenants have a direct relationship with our eternal destiny (hell or heaven). Any sinner who lives and dies and ends up banished from God's presence in hell, does so according to the terms of the covenant of works. **"...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."** (Gal. 2:16). But ahí , the good news of the gospel of grace reveals that any sinner who lives and dies and goes to heaven does so according to the terms of the everlasting covenant of grace, i.e. ó according to the gospel of God's grace. **"For by grace are ye saved through faith;..."** (Eph. 2:8).

B. So, today we will focus on that most important covenant made between God the Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit ó an everlasting covenant, which in our text today, David declares was a covenant God made with him. And that's what we'll be considering today ó How can this everlasting covenant of grace be said to have been made with David? And closer to home, can it be said to be made with you and with me?

C. The terms of the covenant of works are: DO AND LIVE; DISOBEY AND DIE.

1. The covenant of works is a conditional covenant towards the sinner, and it makes no provision for salvation, recovery or redemption. There are no 2nd chances set forth. There is no mention of a mediator or a redeemer, and, therefore, there is no hope of salvation for any sinner in the covenant of works. **"...by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified..."** (Rom. 3:20).

D. The terms of the everlasting covenant of grace are: SALVATION CONDITIONED SOLELY UPON CHRIST'S FINISHED WORK OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AT CALVARY, FREELY IMPUTED TO ALL SINNERS FOR WHOM HE LIVED AND DIED. (Hold your place in II Samuel 23 and turn to I Tim. Chapter 1.)

1. This is a conditional covenant towards Christ, the sinner's Substitute and Surety, but not towards sinners chosen in Christ. To God's chosen people in Christ it is totally unconditional. It is a covenant of grace.
2. It is also an everlasting covenant. Christ was set up from everlasting to be the Mediator of this covenant, and all that He did in His incarnation, obedience, and death on the cross, was in fulfillment of all the conditions of this covenant on behalf of His sheep, those He represented, a multitude which God had given Him (the election of grace), and by His obedience unto death establish for them a perfect righteousness whereby God could be just to justify these otherwise ungodly sinners. Look now at I Timothy 1:9: ***God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, <the everlasting covenant of grace> which was given us in Christ before the world began.***"

E. Now God's Gospel (how God saves sinners) is the proclamation in time of all the particular terms of the everlasting covenant of grace which was made between the Father, the Son (as Mediator and Representative of His people), and the Holy Spirit, before time began.

F. The conditions of the everlasting covenant must be met in time for all of God's elect who are born in time, in accordance with God's revealed will. The covenant itself demands it for Christ obligated Himself to accomplish in time that which is necessary for God to justly justify the ungodly. There is no other way but in Christ's obedience unto death that God could act in accordance with who He is in His redemptive character as both a just God and a Savior so as to save any sinner.

G. Today, we will read of David's assurance of salvation, expressed by his stating that God had made with him an everlasting covenant.

H. This should prompt us all to ask, "Has God likewise made that everlasting covenant with me or do I find my only representation before God's eternal bar of justice to be in Adam under the terms of the covenant of works? You see, we embrace the terms of whichever of these 2 covenants reflects our hope – what we're trusting in for our own salvation.

III. Text & Commentary: (Read II Sam. 23:1-5, commenting as you go through verses 1-4)

A. Verse 1:

1. The last words of David – Not literally the last words for he gave advice to Solomon about building the temple after this time – but the last words after he finished writing the Psalms. And I believe we should understand this as akin to David expressing that the words that follow are to be considered as the last word on this subject as it concerns my own eternal hope – an expression of what really matters to him. We're talking about eternity, so it is if he is saying, "Here is my last word on this all important issue" – where his hope lies.
2. Son of Jesse / raised on high – from a low estate to a high one / from a Shepherd to the throne The anointed – anointed King by Samuel

3. Sweet Psalmist ó who composed most of the songs and hymns recorded in the Psalms, all under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 4. All these descriptions of David given of himself should also be considered as he is often portrayed in scripture, i.e., as a type of Christ. Isa. 11:1: ***“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”*** Christ would be highly exalted ó an earned exaltation. He was anointed to be prophet, priest and king. And Christ Himself expounded upon the psalms (as part of all the Old Testament scriptures) concerning Himself (Luke 24:44); He was raised from David, Christ, the Son of David, born in a manger to sit on the throne as the Lord our righteousness (Jer 23:5-6).
- B. Verse 2: Both the Psalms composed by David and his prophecy were not a product of his own intellect but of the Holy Spirit ó by whom holy men of God spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21).
- C. Verse 3:
1. God of Israel ó God the Father, (the covenant God of Israel) said and the same was said by the Rock of Israel (God the Son, the Rock of Ages). Notice the entire Godhead spoke to Him (if we go back and consider vs. 2). And this is consistent with the full engagement of the Godhead in the everlasting covenant that David rejoices in having been made with him (ref. verse 5).
 2. And hear their message, beginning with the nature of Christ’s rule or reign in this spiritual kingdom:
 - (a) Just ó Rule with justice
 - (b) In the fear of God ó must rule in the fear of God (respect for the honor of His character)
- D. Verse 4: Today I will not delve into all which these descriptions of our Savior depict concerning His person and work, but rather simply want to show how we can know that he is referring to Christ in His incarnation here, as the One that ruleth in justice and in the fear of God.
1. We can know this simply because so many other scriptures use these metaphors to speak of Christ. Thereby, we can know that He is the one David is referring to him. For example, it is prophesied concerning Christ’s incarnation that He shall grow up as a tender plant, Isa 53:2; He is the true light that shines, John 1:9; the morning star, Revelation 22:16; the dayspring from on high, Luke 1:78; the sun of righteousness, Malachi 4:2; and light of the world, John 8:2; his going forth or appearance in human nature, at his incarnation, was as the morning, Hosea 6:3;
- E. Verse 5:
1. Though my house be not so ó
 - (a) Perhaps speaking of his own family
 - (b) or perhaps of his kingdom or throne ó not going to be an everlasting one, not sure and certain, etc. ó not to extend beyond the promise of the Messiah

2. This covenant (vs. 5) is described as.

(a) Everlasting ó the covenant of grace entered into by Christ as the Head and Representative of the sheep is an everlasting one. It was from everlasting and will ever last! All of its terms were certain to be fulfilled and it cannot be broken.

(b) It is ordered in all things and sure because it stands upon a sure basis. It was purposed by God the Father, put in the hands of Christ, God the Son, and its terms fully accomplished by Him, the God-man, on the cross. And it is revealed to all for whom this covenant was made in Christ, by God, the Holy Spirit.

(c) Ordered in all things ó

(1) So well ordered to advance the glory of God and the honor of the Mediator (how He rules in justice / fear of God). It's ordered ó it shall take place just as God purposed and promised.

(2) All that is required was agreed upon in this covenant and would (and will) with a certainty take place ó so as to make the salvation to all with whom this covenant is made (in their Representative & Substitute) sure and certain ó all the way to life everlasting.

(d) Sure ó

(1) The promised mercies here are sure because of the sure performance of the conditions required ó satisfaction made & so sure to all the seed. It is sure because all of salvation is conditioned on Christ alone and not conditioned on the sinner in any way.

(2) A covenant is defined as a binding agreement ó this one made by the omnipotent, omniscient triune God ó If God has bound Himself, it cannot fail. To dare suggest that Christ died for sinners who perish is to deny His power, wisdom, and justice ó & thereby is to deny Him. Sadly, it is to be looking to a counterfeit, ðanother Jesus.ö

3. David goes on here to say:

(a) It was all his salvation.

(b) And all his desire. (Will address this further in a moment, but 1st considerí)

4. Though he make it not to grow --

(a) Not spread to my house orí

(b) Or the Messiah, (the branch, the tender grass) has not yet sprung forth, though he certainly would. The Hebrew word for ðgrowö = to bear, or spring forth, or to bud.

IV. What about you and me?

A. How did David know that God made this covenant with him ó that he was represented by Christ? However he knew ó it is the same way that you or I can know if we have a personal stake in this covenant.

1. This is a covenant that God made (you don't make this) ó but rather God's people simply discover their interest in it, seeing the necessity of (& thereby the certainty of) their full representation in Christ ó that when He died, I died, etc. God makes this covenant with His sheep in the Person of their Representative and Surety, their Substitute ó the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. So how can you know with the certainty expressed by David that God made this covenant with you? Well here's the test: Is it, (as it was made to be for David (through God-given faith))í :

(a) All your salvation?

- (1) Does your salvation depend upon this covenant and, more specifically, the certain fulfillment of its terms by Christ, the Lord our righteousness?
- (2) Nothing but what was covenanted to be accomplished by Christ at Calvary (and was accomplished by Christ at Calvary) will save me from my sins. It is exclusively Christ and His righteousness I must have. There's no other way that sinful men are reconciled unto a holy God. It is solely this way. The notion of "You come your way and I'll come mine" is pure fiction. You need to be found in Christ and His righteousness alone ó made yours by God's free imputation. Is that all of your salvation?
- (3) And it is all ó there is nothing that can be added to it. The work was finished at Calvary. All the conditions of this covenant were fulfilled there.

(b) All your desire?

- (1) To see the terms of this covenant fulfilled at the cross and to see my interest in Christ and His work credited to me is all that I desire. This is all I'm interested in when it comes to my standing before God.
- (2) Is this my last word ó i.e., is all my hope wrapped up in the fulfillment of the terms of that covenant?
- (3) It is for me and as such, I desire nothing else & nothing more ó I must be found in Him.

(Be turning to Isaiah 55)

3. Now if you can say with your heart that what was accomplished in the fulfillment of the terms of the everlasting covenant of grace (the righteousness of God in Christ, finished at the cross, and made yours, the sinner, by God's free imputation of it to you) ó that it is (1) All your salvation & (2) it is all your desire ó then rejoice with David! And not because you simply "say it" but because it's been made your heart's conviction. If so, He's made an everlasting covenant with you!!! Thereby, you can know that you were put in Him in the everlasting covenant of grace and so represented fully in what He accomplished on your behalf at Calvary! And thereby know that you shall live with Him forever in heaven's everlasting glory!

V. Summary

A. Read Isaiah 55:1-3:

B. How can this be said unto sinners to come, hear and live if this covenant is totally unconditional to those with whom it has been made in Christ? Are those conditions? No, because to come to Him as He is revealed in His word by God the Holy Spirit, is to believe the gospel which sets forth the terms of the everlasting covenant (terms that exclude any condition being met by you (including your coming, your hearing, your acceptance ó you come ðwith no moneyð)). No, to come to Him is to submit to His righteousness alone for all of your salvation ó all conditioned on Christ and Him alone, the terms of the everlasting covenant of grace.

C. So, hear God's word ó If God draws you to incline your ear and come unto Him, then hear with the God-given ears of faith of your interest in Him.

D. Christ said in John 10:27-30: ***My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*** <they come to me by the effectual calling of God the Holy Spirit as He fulfils His role in the everlasting covenant by pointing them to Christ> ²⁸***And I give unto them eternal life;*** <By virtue of Christ's finished work in fulfillment of His role in the everlasting covenant> ***and they shall never perish, <it's everlasting> neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*** ²⁹***My Father, which gave them me, <In His role in the everlasting covenant.> is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*** ³⁰***I and my Father are one.***

E. So, how you can know if that everlasting covenant was made with you in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Surety and Substitute for all those the Father gave Him from everlasting? Can you say with David that God has made with you an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure? Well, is Christ's Person and work in fulfillment of the terms of this covenant all of your salvation and all your desire? If so, know that the triune God has indeed made this everlasting covenant with you ó the sure mercies of David!

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself ó the Bible.