SHOW SLIDE 1 | A Promise for Every Day



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jackson, today we get to celebrate with you. In a few moments, you will reaffirm the promises that were made on your behalf at your baptism when you were too young to even talk. Today, you'll speak for yourself as you affirm your faith and the life you intend to live as a follower of Jesus. Your family and this congregation have been and always will be here with you, giving thanks for God's work in your life. There is a sentence in the service I hope you remember long after today: "I do, and I ask God to help and guide me." Those words give us a good way to understand Confirmation Sunday, Reformation Sunday, and even this difficult story about King David.

SHOW SLIDE 2 | Power Can Hurt



We begin with a king who has done terrible harm. David sees Bathsheba and sends for her. He takes another man's wife, then arranges for her husband, Uriah, to be killed in battle. He uses royal power to get what he wants and to cover up what he has done. Bathsheba mourns. Her husband, Uriah is dead. These are people whose lives matter to God. Before we talk about forgiveness, we need to acknowledge their suffering. A sermon about David must leave room for the people David hurt. God's people have a responsibility to listen when someone has been harmed, especially when the person responsible has power.

SHOW SLIDE 3 | The Truth Comes Home



Then God sends Nathan to speak to David. Nathan tells him about a rich man who takes a poor man's beloved lamb. David is outraged. He knows exactly what should happen to that no good so and so. Then Nathan looks at him and says, "You are the man!" … That must have been a hard sentence to hear. David can

see another person's wrongdoing clearly. Facing his own is much harder. We recognize that tendency. We can explain our impatience, defend an unkind remark, or find reasons why our situation ought to be treated differently. Meanwhile, somebody else may still be living with the hurt we caused.

God's Word brings that truth home. Sometimes we hear it in scripture. Sometimes a person who loves us tells us something we would rather avoid. Sometimes someone we have hurt asks us to listen. Repentance begins as we stop explaining everything away and let the truth reach us. Then true repentance settles in and we take responsibility for the mess we created.

SHOW SLIDE 4 | Have Mercy on Me



Psalm 51 gives us a prayer for that moment: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.” That prayer puts our hope in God's character. We ask for mercy because God is merciful. We confess because we have somewhere to bring the truth about ourselves. God's steadfast love gives us courage to face what needs to change.

SHOW SLIDE 5 | Saved by Grace



This is also where the Reformation speaks to our lives. The first of Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses says that the whole life of a believer should be a life of repentance. The whole life. We keep returning to hear God's Word, we receive God's forgiveness in Holy Communion, then God turns us outward from here toward our neighbors. The church needs that turning too. We need God to uncover the ways our personal habits and our institutions can hurt people, and to lead us into faithful service. Luther proclaimed we are justified by grace through faith for Christ's sake. God's forgiveness comes to us as a gift. Jesus gives himself for sinners. Through his death and resurrection, he brings us into the life we could never earn for ourselves. That good news matters when we know we have failed. It matters when we're exhausted from trying to prove we deserve love. The gospel directs our attention to Jesus. Our Savior has already come to us in love, and his faithfulness gives us something solid to trust.

God's forgiveness also frees us to take responsibility. We can apologize without making excuses. We can seek to repair damage and accept that rebuilding

trust may take time. Grace gives us a future in which we can learn to care more faithfully for the people around us.

SHOW SLIDE 6 | Begin Again



Luther connected this daily life with baptism. In the Small Catechism, he teaches baptism means a daily dying to sin and a daily rising to new life before God. Baptism continues to shape our ordinary days. We return to the promise God has made, receive mercy, and begin again. Jackson, that's the life you are affirming today. God has already claimed you in baptism.

SHOW SLIDE 7 | Live Your Baptism



Today you confess your faith and promise to continue living out your baptismal covenant. You will have God's help as you grow into those promises. You will promise to live among God's faithful people. Here you have people to worship with, people who can listen to your questions, and people who need the

gifts you bring. Keep letting this community be part of your life. Let us know when you need encouragement, and help us notice when somebody else does. You will promise to hear God's Word and share in the Lord's Supper. We need to keep hearing the gospel because so many other voices tell us our worth depends on how good we can be. At Christ's table, we hold out our hands and receive goodness from Jesus. He meets us with forgiveness and strengthens us for life together. Out there in the real world. You will promise to proclaim the good news through word and deed. You may have opportunities to talk about what you believe, but I guarantee everyone you know will be looking at you to see if being a follower of Jesus makes any difference in your life. The way you act and the decisions you make will let them know even without saying a single word. When you include a person who has been left out, offer help to a stranger, or tell the truth when a lie would be easier, others will see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven. You will promise to serve all people, following Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace. Remember the people whose suffering David overlooked. Pay attention when somebody gets pushed aside. Use your voice to help others. Ask God for courage when doing what is right costs something.

These promises stretch across a lifetime. Some days you will follow through readily. Other days you will need forgiveness and help getting started again.

That's why I said these words from the liturgy for Reaffirmation of Baptism are so important. You can keep praying the words you speak today: "I ask God to help and guide me" anytime life throws you a curve ball when you were expecting a slider. (That's a little World Series jargon for y'all.)

SHOW SLIDE 8 | We Walk Together



My beloved congregation, we share this calling with Jackson. He should be able to see adults who ask forgiveness when we fail and who keep showing up for one another. We can pray for him, listen to him, and serve beside him. As he grows, we get to keep growing too. We can keep making room for his questions because as he grows his questions will get tougher! We can help him discover ways to serve, and welcome what God teaches us through his presence among us. What more fitting way to celebrate the Reformation than by continuing to listen to the gospel, by daily returning to God's grace in repentance, and letting God's grace spur us toward serving our neighbors. We give thanks for what God has done in the past while trusting the Holy Spirit to guide our life together today.

Jackson, we are glad to walk with you. You bring your own questions, hopes, and gifts to this congregation. We give thanks for you, and we ask God to strengthen your faith through all the years ahead. When you need to hear a difficult truth, God will still be your refuge. When you need forgiveness, Christ's mercy will still be for you. When you wonder what comes next, you can ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide you. Then watch out because the Lord is doing great things through you! I for one can't wait to see what God has in store for you! Today you affirm your baptism. Tomorrow you live another day in its promise. This much I guarantee, the Lord who calls you by name will go with you.

May we all live our lives in daily repentance, basking in the love and forgiveness of our amazing and awesome God. Amen.