

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2020 – FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The Footsteps of Jesus Weekend Experience – A Virtual Pilgrimage of the Life of Jesus

Friday-Sunday, January 15-17, 2021

Friday – 6-8 PM MST / Saturday – 10 AM-2 PM MST / Sunday – 1-4 PM MST

With Lutheran Pastor Bob Rognlien

If you are sick and tired of being cooped-up during this pandemic, come with us on a virtual pilgrimage, following the life of Jesus! In four sessions over three days we will explore the life of Jesus from birth to resurrection, reflecting on the meaning of his life for our lives. From the comfort of your own home you will get to walk in Jesus' footsteps from Bethlehem to Nazareth to Jerusalem as we draw on history, archaeology, and culture to bring Jesus and his extraordinary life into clearer focus, with thousands of photos, reconstruction drawings and maps.

To get more details and register click this link: <https://fojweekendexpvirtual01-15-21.eventbrite.com>.

Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV) The Birth of Jesus Foretold

*The angel Gabriel said to Mary, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."
Later he said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."*

*What does it mean to be highly favored – or even somewhat favored – by God?
Based upon the life of Mary it does not mean that life is going to be easy.
Being favored by God does not protect you from life's bumps and bruises.*

*It is easy to say when things are going our way, "The Lord sure is blessing me."
But have you ever wondered if it is when we are going through the most difficult of times – when we feel like we can barely hold on – that God is actually the closest to us?*

*The angel Gabriel, in saying that Mary was blessed by God, was not saying that God was going to be making her life easy.
Instead he was saying that she would be used by God.
For in the long run, isn't that what being blessed really means?*

*The story of Mary tells us – Be careful whom you call blessed by God, and be careful what you call impossible.
Remember that the next time you are in a hard place.
The angel told Mary, "Nothing will be impossible with God."*

*Be thankful that this young woman said Yes to God.
Mary could have said No to God, just as we are free to say No to God.
But she became the mother of our Savior because she was willing to be obedient to God.*

Saying Yes to God is the key to living a life that is truly blessed.

2 Samuel 7:1-11 (NRSV) God's Covenant with David

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴ But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵ Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶ I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷ Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”

⁸ Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹ and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name.

¹¹ Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever; your throne shall be established forever.

Just think of what it must have meant to David – to know that his house and his kingdom would be made sure forever.

It would not all end with him.

Even when his grandson, Rehoboam, really blew it and lost ten of the twelve tribes, still David’s house, kingdom, and throne would be established forever.

Map showing location of Dan – picture of Tel Dan or “House of David” inscription

The Tel Dan or “House of David” inscription was discovered in 1993 at the site of Tel Dan in northern Israel. The broken and fragmentary inscription commemorates the victory of an Aramean king over his two southern neighbors: the “king of Israel” and the “king of the house of David.” Its significance lies in the fact that it was the first archeological evidence of the significance of the reign of David – one hundred fifty years after his reign his descendants are referred to as members of the “House of David.”

Psalm 89:1-4 (NRSV) God’s Covenant with David

A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite

1 Kings 4: 31 describes Solomon as “wiser than anyone else” – including Ethan the Ezrahite

¹ I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD . . . I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

² Your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

³ You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David:

⁴ I will establish your descendants forever and build your throne for all generations.”

Romans 16:25-27 (NRSV) Final Doxology

²⁵ Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.