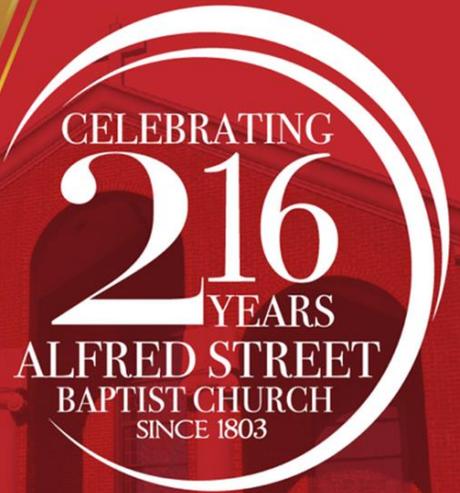


Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson

“Never Forsaken:
A Testimony of Favor”

Psalm 37:25
New King James Version (NKJV)



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Sunday, November 17, 2019

Preacher: Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson

Sermon: Never Forsaken:

A Testimony of Favor

Scripture: Psalm 37:25



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Sermon Summary

Dr. Richardson shared that Alfred Street's 216th Anniversary is not only about the slaves that established the church, it is also about us and everyone that has come after. Using our theme scripture Psalm 37:25, he explained that this anniversary is a testament of resilience for us as a people, possible only because God has and continues to shield us.

Key Points

1. "I was young and now I am old."
 - Our stories of surviving and overcoming hardships is a testimony of favor
2. "I have never seen the righteous forsaken"
 - God is the God of was-ness and is-ness
 - God has never forsaken us
3. "...Or their children begging bread"
 - God is the God of what shall be
 - God will be there for our children and generations to come

Notes for Facilitators:

This is the final week to submit your recommendations for new hosts and facilitators for the winter season. Remember, every Village is expected to make at least two recommendations. Sign up links are located at www.alfredstreet.org/village. Returning and new Village leaders are encouraged to RSVP for the training using the link in this week's email. We look forward to seeing you all this Saturday, November 23rd for Village Training Day.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. In Psalm 37:25, David says "I have been young and now I am old," and teaches us what he learns. What lessons has age taught you?
2. Anniversaries represent a return to the same moment. Over your own life, you will return to the same moments (life events, challenges, holidays, etc.). As we encounter recurring situations, what advice can you share with others about approaching it with new insights?



Into The Bible Questions:

1. Similar to David in Psalm 37:25, declare something that you have learned or witnessed with absolute confidence in your walk with God.
2. Rev. Richardson said that Colossians 3:22 states: "... slaves obey your master." We know that in spite of that scripture, slaves continued to trust that God would move them out of slavery. What other biblical teachings and scriptures do you struggle with believing literally?

Life Application Questions:

1. The African-American church tradition honors the experiences of our "Seasoned Saints." As we honor a 216-year church anniversary, what have you learned from the faith of those more seasoned than you?
2. Rev. Richardson talked about our collective 216-year church history as a declaration of resilience.
 - a. In what ways has your life been an individual declaration of resilience?
 - b. How is our resilience a testament to God's faithfulness?
3. Rev. Richardson remarked that "in the middle of our founders' struggle, they held on to the hand of God. What current struggles do you see in your own life, or in our society and how do you still see the hand of God?
4. God is a God of history (past, present and future). As you look over your family history, what generational challenges has your family continually wrestled with and how do you navigate them?



"Can I Push It?"

1. Rev. Richardson talked about how enslaved people produced their own non-oppressive theology in the face of scripture teachings intended to oppress them and keep them docile. In what ways have you created your own liberating theology that makes space for empowerment?
2. How do we reconcile "I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging for bread," with the reality of more than 250 years of slavery and generations of poverty?

Spirit Work:

Rev. Richardson stated that anniversaries are about the faithfulness of God. Reflect back on the anniversaries you have celebrated in your life and take the time to write a thank you note to God.



Activity:

Anniversary Markers:

We take special notice of our church's 216th anniversary because it is a moment dedicated to offering God gratitude for the legacy we stand on. All of us have anniversaries in our lives that we should commemorate. There are anniversaries of healings, job offers, relocations, graduations, just to name a few. We should pause on all of these days to give God thanks for God's blessings. Using a paper or phone calendar write down at least three anniversaries you want to begin celebrating in 2020. Share ideas with your Village for inspiration.

Additional Questions for Married Couples Villages:

Psalm 37:25, David says "I was young and now I am old." Considering what marriage has taught you over time, what rookie mistakes have you made, and what is one key lesson you can share?

Additional Question for Young Adult Villages:

If you could write Psalm 37:25 in your own words, what would it say, and what would be the reason?

Additional Questions for Parents' Villages:

What responsibility do we have as guardians of children to tell them our stories of youth, how God brought us out, and the legacy of our faith?

Additional Questions for Women Villages:

In a 216-year church history, we know that many unnamed women have contributed to our rich legacy. Take a moment to name a woman who has influenced you here at the church. What influence would you like to have on ASBC in its next chapter, and how would you like to have left a fingerprint on the richness of our congregation?