

Stef Grossano:

Good morning.

Speaker 2:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Stef Grossano:

And welcome to Morning Prayers. Our speaker this morning is Ahmaad Edmund. He's a third-year Master of Divinity student at Harvard Divinity School, and a Pastoral Associate at the First Church in Cambridge. Welcome.

Our service today will begin with a responsive reading of Psalm 71. So, please rise, embody our spirit as we read the Psalm responsibly, by whole verse. In thee, oh Lord, do I put my trust. Let me never be put to confusion.

Congregation:

Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape. Incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

Stef Grossano:

Be thou my strong habitation, for unto I may continually resort. Thou has given commandment to save me, for thou art my rock and my fortress.

Congregation:

Deliver me, oh my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

Stef Grossano:

For thou art my hope, oh Lord God. Thou art my trust from my youth.

Congregation:

I am as a wonder unto many, but thou art my strong refuge.

Stef Grossano:

Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honor all the day.

Congregation:

Cast me not off in the time of old age. Forsake me not when my strength faileth.

Stef Grossano:

My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee, and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

Congregation:

My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long, for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

(singing)

Ahmaad Edmund:

Good morning.

Speaker 2:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Ahmaad Edmund:

Please join me in a word of prayer. Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my hearts be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord. You are our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Ahmaad Edmund:

Good morning. Our scripture comes from Hebrews Chapter 4, Verses 14 through 16. We have a great high priest, who has gone into heaven, and he is Jesus, the son of God. That is why we must hold on to what we have said about him. Jesus understands every weakness of ours because he was tempted in every way that we are, but he did not sin. So, whenever we are in need, we should come bravely before the throne of our merciful God. There we will be treated with undeserved kindness and we will find help for these fleeting moments that belong to us.

I would like to speak from the subject. Hold on. Don't let go. A few weeks ago, I was on Instagram, a social media application that's quite popular these days. One of my friends went to an obstacle course and had someone film her go through this obstacle course. Now to the viewer, the obstacle course was both exhilarating and daunting. As I watched her, I noticed a few things about what she did. She was on a swing-like event, trying to get across a pit of foam cubes at a length of probably 30 feet. I thought to myself, how will she get across this pit of foam cubes?

Well, the young lady held onto the ropes that were connected to the ceiling and moved one step at a time. Eventually, she made it to the other side. I was encouraged by that. I knew that God speaks to us sometimes in simple ways. The first thing I noticed, friends, is that she kept her focus. She kept her focus on the end result. Second thing that I noticed is that she continued to move forward. No matter the anxiety that built up in her to move on this obstacle course, she was determined to get to the other side. And finally, she never let go of the ropes.

Equally, my prayer today for all of us is that when we navigate this obstacle course called life, that we will never ever let go of those truths, the foundations of our faith. When discouragement pays us a visit. When we get a medical diagnosis. When we feel all alone. I say, "Hold on. Don't let go." When you feel yourself beginning to lose your grip on your faith, I beseech you to call out to God, who feels sympathy

for our weaknesses, who was tempted in every way but sinned not. Let's approach this throne of grace with boldness so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need.

There's a song in my tradition, a hymn in fact, that I also find solace in, that I want to leave you with today as you navigate on this cold February Thursday. Time is filled with swift transitions. None on earth unmoved can stand. Build your hopes on things eternal. Hold to God's unchanging hand. Trust in him who will not leave you, whatsoever the year may bring. When your earthly friends forsake you, still more closely to him cling. Hold to his hand, God's unchanging hand. Hold to his hand, God's unchanging hand. Build your hopes on things eternal. Hold to God's unchanging hand. Hold on and don't let go.

Join me in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you today for your present help. We're living at times of uncertainty and times of trouble, but remind us that you are with us. And if we only cling to you, you most certainly will cling to us. Let us pray that prayer that we were taught. Our Father-

Congregation:

Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Stef Grossano:

Please rise, embody your spirit as we sing Hymn 338, High O'er the Lonely Hills.

(singing)

As we go into this day, may we remember in the goodness of God, we were born into this world. By the grace of God, we have been kept all the day long, even unto this very hour. And by the love of God, we are being made whole. Go in peace. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.