Acts 2:25-28 Indeed, David says concerning him: I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoiced. My flesh also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon my life to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made know to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence.

I am assuming that most of you know the history and context of the words that are before us. These words are taken from the Book of Acts, that historical record of how the disciples began the sharing of the message of eternal life and salvation in Jesus to the world. Remember, at first the disciples are filled with fear and grief because Jesus had been killed. That fear and grief went on for at least a week after the resurrection of Jesus, so it is kind of implied that it took them a while to grasp just what had happened.

What had happened is that Jesus rose from the dead. The women saw angels and then even Jesus himself on that morning of Resurrection. Later on, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus also had an encounter with Jesus, an extended one, where Jesus explained how the Old Testament prophecies were all about him and the resurrection he was displaying to them. That moment ended with Jesus at their table as if to dine and when Jesus gave the blessing and broke the bread we are told he simply disappeared! The text records that those two disciples hustled back to tell the others what they had seen.

In Luke it is then recorded that as the disciples were talking about these things, literally discussing the appearances of Jesus to the women and to the disciples from Emmaus, Jesus stood among them. You heard John’s account of that in our readings for today. Did you note **“they were together behind locked doors because of their fear of the Jews?”** Jesus stood among them, spoke with them, interacted with them physically so they could grasp….He was alive!

Our Gospel lesson included the fact that Thomas was not with them and that Thomas would not believe what they were telling him unless he himself had physical proof. We are then told, that the next Sunday night Jesus once again stood among them and literally confronts the unbelief and doubt of Thomas! But did you note what the text said? The disciples were gathered but **“the doors were locked.”** Those locked doors tell us they were still afraid. Those locked doors tell us that though most of them had seen Jesus, touched him, spoke with him, and interacted with him, they were still wrestling with the whole concept that the guy that had died was now alive!! It is this second appearance of Jesus that seems finally to have gotten the message into their brains: Jesus is alive!

I say that because now they end up in Galilee. Now they see Jesus more. For the next 40 days they get to experience Jesus again and again. It is also clear that we do not have all the accounts of Jesus appearing alive. Without a doubt people are absolutely, positively convinced that Jesus is alive. Yet it was a process. I am always filled with fascination at Matthew’s account of the ascension of Jesus. They were gathered, quite a number of disciples and Matthew records this: **“When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some hesitated because they were uncertain.”** Those words tell us that some of the early believers had difficulties with believing. I can understand why. People just don’t die, lay around for a couple of days and then rise from the dead!

Eventually because of the work of the Holy Spirit, the facts and wonders of the resurrection of Jesus were established and the message of the risen Lord went out to all the world. Our text occurs on the day of Pentecost, that day when the Holy Spirit openly began his work of calling people to faith and calling people to believe in Jesus Christ as God and Lord. I particularly like this section of God’s Word because it tells exactly how the disciples solidified their faith in Jesus. It wasn’t just the 40 days that Jesus spent appearing to them that convinced them. What is also clear in our words is that a big influence on their faith and understanding was the Word of God.

So here is Peter, preaching at Pentecost. He wants to help the Jewish people grasp that Jesus lives and that Jesus is the Christ the Savior of the world. How does he do it? With the same method that helped Peter and the others get to the point where they are now in the middle of Jerusalem, among the Jews that killed Jesus, and Peter is preaching and proclaiming that Jesus Christ is God and Lord! How can they be so sure? Not just because of the appearances of Jesus but also because Peter and the others were brought to the realization that everything that happened had been prophesied and proclaimed in God’s Old Testament record. Yep, they use the Word of God to show the truth of God.

That section of God’s Word that Peter refers to is quite something. It is from a Psalm of David, Psalm 16. You can’t have something written some 1,000 years before hand and speak so clearly and accurately about the resurrection without it being of and from God himself. God’s Word helps us to believe. Let’s take a closer look at the words that Peter uses to proclaim Jesus the Savior that we might believe all the more. Our theme will be: **I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.**

The words before us are a wonderful proclamation of the facts and truths that come out of the Resurrection history of Jesus. David, both a king of the Jews and a prophet of the Lord was given this wonderful prophecy about the Savior to come, a prophecy that gives the reason and point of his faith. When we grasp that simple truth of this Psalm, we then want to ask the rather direct question: So why was David able to say “I will not be shaken?”

We can take each line of this Psalm and come to our answer. David says, **“I saw the Lord always before me.”** Wonderful words that tell us that David understood the eternal nature of the Lord God. God was, is and always will be a force and presence in the life of David, actually all of mankind. This is not because David thinks so, this is because David has come to grasp the eternal nature of God. A nature that does not change, shift, or alter, but a nature that always is because that nature is eternal, that is, never ending. David grasp this because God has revealed it to him. Such is the nature of God.

On this basis then, David makes the next conclusion: **“Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”** All of this flows from David’s grasp of the eternal nature of God. In this confession, David tells us he knows that the eternal God is at his right hand. That is a phrase that means God is with David, watching over David, helping David, and even protecting David in every way. I think even you and I can grasp the wonder of this. Seriously, if you were to know that God is with you in every way, always, for your good what would you say? Yep, **“I will not be shaken.”** No matter what is going on, no matter when or how, good or difficult, stressful or exciting, trying or joyful, everything is endurable because God is with you! I hope you know this wonderful truth.

Now comes the next lesson, actually the next two lines go together. They say: **“Therefore my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoiced.”** Now, pay attention! See that **“therefore?”** That therefore refers you back to the previous statements, to the fact that God is eternal, that God is with you and taking care of you in every way. The result of that wonder of God is what I am going to call the wonder of faith in action. Here is David expressing how faith shows itself. His heart is glad. There is just an underlying wonder and joy in the heart because of the goodness and greatness of God. More than that, we find that this faith also wants to express itself, to share the joy it finds in the Lord God. My heart is filled with joy and my tongue is found to express that joy in every way.

By the way, it is this line that puts my fears to rest. I hear many Pastors out there expressing worry about how this “social distancing” is going to change how people think of worship. They are afraid that people will just want to stay home and get their services electronically from now on. I am not afraid of that. I am not, because I believe that God will still motivate and move the hearts of believers to gather together to give him glory and praise. It is true, our electronic services can help the weak and be a wonderful way to share the Gospel with a vast audience, but I have no fear that people will no longer want to come to Church. For that matter, I think God’s children are learning all the more the value of having a heart full of Jesus and having a Church full of tongues willing to share the rejoicing in Jesus. Pastors, David said, **“I will not be shaken.”** You too, okay!

And now David’s words go on and he expresses even more the wonder of what our faith is. He is moved to write: **“My flesh will also rest in hope.”** Now we will stop there and speak of these words even though clearly there is a whole sentence here to speak of. Here is David expressing the impact faith has on his physical life. It is at peace. It rests, actually it rests in hope. There is in this physical life a sure and certain hope that David wants to share with us. If we just take this message of wonder we recognize that we are being told not to worry about our earthly life. Does God care for you? Does God promise to watch over you and especially to give you the comfort and encouragement that all will work to your eternal good and salvation? The answer is a resounding, “Yes.” God is with us, we will not fear.

But there is even more to be understood in these words. We find that more brought out in the next line: **“because you will not abandon me to the grave.”** This rest in hope that we have is bigger than just knowing and understanding that God will take care of you here in this life. This rest in hope is also because we grasp the wonder of the resurrection and eternal life. These words tell us that David grasps the issue of all flesh, yes, that all flesh eventually ends up in the grave. But that is not the end. David clearly confesses that God will not abandon us in the grave. God is bigger than death, because God is the God of life, eternal life and hope found in the Savior. These words clearly express the wonder and joy of eternal life, life beyond the grave and life that will even spring from the grave. The next line tells us why.

That line says, **“Nor will you let your Holy One see decay.”** Don’t miss this. All of this hope and sureness in God is because of this one line and truth. The Holy One of God, a reference to the promised Messiah, the One who will rescue from sin and deliver from death, this Holy One of God will himself not see decay.

Here is the life and ministry of Jesus compacted into one awesome and hope filled sentence. Since the Holy One, the Messiah of God, is not going to experience the decay of the grave, David expresses that such is also his very hope and assurance. Welcome to the whole point of the life of Jesus. Jesus came into this world to serve as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Jesus came to save us, to wash us clean and present us holy and pure before his Father in heaven. Jesus did that by his humiliation, the fact that He came down from heaven to become a man and to live the holy life we could not. Then Jesus served as our Passover lamb, as the sacrifice that defeats and overcomes not only death but brings us freedom and hope. This line alludes to the death of the Holy One and yet there will be no decay. We now know why. Jesus will be raised from the dead. Jesus, though he dies, will live. And without any doubt whatsoever, David is confessing what all of us, I pray, wonderfully and deeply know: Because Jesus lives so shall we! The heart and core of everything God promises is wrapped up in this Holy One and the one great event that will make Him different than any other: He will die and live. He will be raised. Death will not hold him but the wonder of life, true life will be found in Him.

And now all the more the wonder of the next words stand out. **“You have made known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence.”** Here is the confession of faith in what Jesus has done and accomplished. Here is the true path of life, the real Way and Truth and Life. Here is Jesus, the risen and ascended. Jesus the Son of God and Savior from sin. And in all of this we find the joyful and eternal result to be that we will be with God forever in his eternal kingdom of heaven.

Please, don’t miss the connection of this reading with that of our Epistle reading for today. That Epistle reading is from 1 Peter. It said, **“By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. Through faith you are being protected by God’s power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time. Because of this you rejoice very much…”** Keep reading that Epistle and see that David and Peter confess the very same thing!

Do you see why Peter used this Psalm to speak to the Jewish people about the hope and wonder of Jesus? Even David, prophet of old, foresaw, foretold and confessed the joy of salvation found in the risen and forever alive Jesus! In other words, it is what their whole faith had been about and now it is also what the whole faith of Jesus is about.

So! Let’s go back to the words of our theme. Are they your words? Are they your hope and confidence, not because of you, but rather because of Jesus and his eternal wonder and promises? Do you confess: I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN? I pray so, because the eternal and faithful Jesus is with us. The Lord our God, Jesus, tells us He will watch over us, guard and protect us, guide and help us until we reach his eternal and sure kingdom of heaven. Jesus shows us this is all true because He lives! He who was dead is alive and He is thus our God and Lord, the one in whom our flesh rests in hope. Jesus fills us with gladness. Jesus causes our tongues to sing out in joy. In Jesus we fully grasp the point of faith: I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.

And so it is. Jesus lives and so shall we. Amen.