



Psalm 100 says, “Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God!” The beginning of that psalm encapsulates the lesson we learned from 2 Samuel 6 last week: We are to *seek* the Lord’s presence *reverently*, and we’re to *celebrate* it *joyfully*.

Today we come to 2 Samuel 7, which is one of the most important chapters not only in 2 Samuel but in the entire Old Testament! Here God makes a promise to David which holds tremendous significance for us. So, please turn with me to 2 Samuel 7 (page 242, pew Bible). The chapter begins with a burden on David’s heart – a concern he shares with Nathan the prophet. In verses 1-3 we read,

Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.”

- 2 Samuel 7:1-3

Here we see another reason as to why David was called “a man after God’s own heart.” Once David became king, conquered Jerusalem, brought the ark of God into the city and was finally able to enjoy some respite after all the troubles he had experienced, David wondered how he might serve the Lord during this new season of life.

Sometimes we do the opposite when things are going well. When life is hard and we’re under duress, we turn to God in our desperation. Then, once God delivers us and life is good, we get preoccupied with our own interests and God gets pushed to the periphery.

But such was not the case with David here. Instead, he wondered what he could do for the Lord, who had done so much for him. As David sat in his beautiful “house of cedar,” he felt bad that the “ark of God” was still sitting in a plain tent. David shared his concern with Nathan the prophet. This is another indication of David’s heart for God. One of his closest friends was a godly prophet who shared the same spiritual priorities as David. When David shared his heart with Nathan, he replied, “Go for it. Do whatever’s on your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

Now, when Nathan said this, he was speaking as a friend, not in his official capacity as a prophet. David wanted to do something for the Lord, so Nathan’s first impulse was to encourage his friend in that regard. But as it turns out, the Lord had something different in mind – a complete reversal of David’s plan.

The Promise of God (vv. 1-17)

⁴ But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, ⁵ “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell 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 for my dwelling. ⁷ In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges 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, that you should 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, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” ¹⁷ In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

- 2 Samuel 7:4-17

The Lord begins his response by objecting to David’s plan and explaining why. First, the Lord cannot be confined to a temple. This point was reiterated by David’s son Solomon when he finally did build the temple. During the dedication ceremony, Solomon prayed, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built?” (1 Kings 8:27).

The second thing the Lord says is, “I haven’t lived in a house since I brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. I’ve traveled in a tent the whole time and never once complained to any of the leaders, ‘Why haven’t you built me a house of cedar?’”

⇒ Consider the gracious condescension of God! He identifies with his people and travels with us over the rugged terrain of life, “through many dangers, toils and snares.” He’s with us when we pass through the waters so they don’t overwhelm us. He’s with us when we walk through the fire so we don’t get burned. He’s with us every step of the way, “sharing the rigors of the journey with [us].”¹

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*. Focus on the Bible Commentary Series

Not only is he with us, but he also does great things for us. In verses 8-9, God reviews what he has done for David: The Lord took him from the sheep pasture and made him prince over the Lord's people, Israel. The Lord was with David wherever he went and cut off all his enemies. "In essence, God has done *everything* for David."²

But God isn't done doing great things for David. There is still yet more to come! The Lord declares to David in verse 11, "Instead of you building me a house, I'm going to build you a house!" The word "house" appears fifteen times in this chapter. Sometimes it is used *literally*, referring to a physical building such as a palace or temple, as it does in the first part of the chapter (vv. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 13). But in verse 11 and throughout the second half of the chapter (vv. 16-29), the word "house" is used metaphorically, referring either to David's extended family or clan in the past, or to his royal dynasty in the future – just like the current British Royal Family is called "the house of Windsor."

God's promises about both these things – the physical temple and the royal dynasty – are brought together in verse 13: David's son will build the temple; the dynasty will last forever.³ More sons will be born, and God will be a father to them. When they sin, God will discipline them, but he won't remove his mercy from them as he did from King Saul. David's dynasty will last forever. That is God's promise and he reiterates it in verse 16:

"And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me.
Your throne shall be established forever."

- 2 Samuel 7:16

History shows how God's promise to David played out.

- God made David's name great, as he said he would do (v. 9). "Without question, David was Israel's greatest king and his reputation stands for all time as one of the greatest men of history."⁴ Michelangelo's 17-foot marble sculpture of David, built over five centuries ago, is a tribute to his greatness and is regarded as one of the grandest statues of all time. Today in the world of business and sports, accounts of people overcoming seemingly impossible odds are expressed as "David and Goliath" stories. Three thousand years after his lifetime, David's name is still great.
- David's son Solomon succeeded him on the throne, as God said he would, thus establishing a royal dynasty. Throughout his reign, Israel enjoyed a time of peace.
- Solomon built the temple, just as God said he would.
- Many of David's descendants were unworthy kings and God punished them accordingly, but the dynasty continued unbroken for four centuries.

(Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 1999, reprinted 2018), 85.

² Bill T. Arnold, *1 and 2 Samuel: The NIV Application Commentary*, gen. ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2003), 474.

³ *New Bible Commentary*, fourth edition, edited by G. J. Wenham, J. A. Motyer, D. A. Carson and R. T. France (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, reprinted 2010), p. 325.

⁴ *Ibid.*

- But in 587 B.C. the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, the people got taken into captivity, and though the family of David continued to exist, they never regained the throne.
- Had the promises of God failed? Not at all! Because God's covenant with David would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Turn with me to the Gospel of Matthew (p. 757). Matthew begins his gospel with these words: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Matthew then lists the generations by name from Abraham to David to Christ, after which he says, "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity of Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations." The royal dynasty of David culminates in Jesus Christ.
 - You won't find a more recent genealogical link to David than Jesus, because he is the end of the line. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise to make the house of David an eternal dynasty. The kingdom continues forever through Christ!
 - Peter emphasized this point as he preached on the day of Pentecost, which is recorded in Acts 2, the text Pastor Mike read earlier. Peter says that David was a prophet, that he knew God had promised that one of David's own descendants would sit on the throne, and that when David said in Psalm 16 that God would not leave him among the dead or allow his body to rot in the grave, David wasn't talking about himself but was looking into the future and speaking of the Messiah's resurrection – a miracle of which Peter and the other apostles were all eye-witnesses – and now Jesus sits enthroned as King in the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand.

David had planned to build God a house, but God reversed that plan and promised to build David a house – a dynasty and a kingdom that would culminate in Jesus Christ and last forever. This promise from God had a profound effect on David.

The Prayer of Gratitude (vv. 18-29)

¹⁸ Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? ¹⁹ And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord God! ²⁰ And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God! ²¹ Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. ²² Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. ²³ And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome

things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? ²⁴ And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O Lord, became their God. ²⁵ And now, O Lord God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. ²⁶ And your name will be magnified forever, saying, 'The Lord of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of your servant David will be established before you. ²⁷ For you, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. ²⁸ And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. ²⁹ Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever."

- 2 Samuel 7:18-29

The first thing David does is to go into the tent where the ark of God resided and sit in the Lord's presence. David is stupefied, completely overwhelmed by God's grace. He takes time to process everything he has heard and to contemplate the Lord's goodness.

- David marvels over God's *previous* grace. He asks, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?" He goes on to recount the "great and awesome things" God has done – not only for him and his family but for the all the people of Israel. God redeemed them and established them as his people, and he became their God.
- David marvels over God's *promised* grace, the blessings that were yet to come – not only to him and his descendants and the people of Israel, but to all humanity. The global dimensions of God's grace is indicated by David's words in verse 19 when he prays, "You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord God!" The word "instruction" is the Hebrew word *torah*, which is often translated as "law" but can also be used in a more general sense to refer to divine instruction or teaching. God's promises to David are instructive for all humanity, because it is through their fulfillment that God would keep his promise to Abraham that through his offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:3; 22:18). God's promises to Abraham and David are fulfilled in their ultimate descendant, Jesus Christ. David comprehended this truth to some degree which is why he prayed and prophesied about it.

As David praises God for his previous grace and his promised grace, he emphasizes God's sovereignty. God's grace is a *prevailing* grace. Seven times David addresses him as "Lord God" or "Sovereign Lord." Abraham addressed God the same way in Genesis 15, revealing another connection between God's covenant with David and God's covenant with Abraham. Because God is sovereign, he is able to perform all that he has promised (Rom. 4:21).

So much more could be said about God's covenant with David. Yesterday I saw on the news a video clip taken from the helmet camera of a skier who fell into a crevasse and plunging down what seemed to be an endless snow crater. That's how I felt as I delved

into the Davidic covenant. As one commentator noted, “Any reader could drown in the ink that has been spilled over 2 Samuel 7. And the chapter richly deserves all that ink”⁵ due to the massive significance of God’s promises to David. They all find their “Yes” in Jesus, David’s descendant who would bring eternal salvation to the ends of the earth.

***God has built an eternal house
through his Son, King Jesus.***

That’s the key takeaway from today’s text. With this in mind, I’ll close with three points of application from 2 Samuel 7:

1. ***Cultivate a heart for service.*** The chapter began with David’s desire to do some-thing noble for God. God had other plans for David, but the Lord was pleased with his attitude. Years later, when David’s son Solomon built and dedicated the temple to the Lord, Solomon said, “Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. But the LORD said to David my father, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart’” (1 Kings 8:17-18). Not everything we desire to do for God will be part of his plan, but the Lord is pleased with such a mindset. Ten times in 2 Samuel 7, David refers to himself as the Lord’s servant. But more importantly, the Lord says to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David...” (v. 4). There is no higher calling than to serve the Lord. So, cultivate a heart for service.
2. ***Contemplate the grace of God.*** Despite all his kingly responsibilities, David took time to sit before the Lord and contemplate his goodness, recounting his past mercies and reveling in his future grace – the promised blessings that were yet to come. And David thanked the Lord accordingly. Recently, Dave Welker said during one of our elders’ meetings, “If the only things we had in life were the things that we thanked God for, how much would we have?” Even in those times when we do thank God, we tend to rattle off a short list rather than take adequate time to really meditate on all the Lord’s kindness to us. Scripture says, “Consider what great things he has done for you.” So, contemplate the grace of God.
3. ***Communicate the gospel of God.*** As David considered the global significance of the God’s promises, he prayed, “This is instruction for humanity, O Lord God!” This is revelation that everyone needs to know! Yet even after David’s lifetime the Lord would continue to reveal more about the coming Messiah. Yet David proclaimed what he knew. He wanted the whole earth to understand the significance of God’s promises and to experience the blessings of salvation. We have the completed revelation of God, all sixty-six books of the Bible, in our possession. We’re not meant to keep this good news to ourselves, so spread the word.

So, sit down and thank God. Stand on his promises. Go share the good news with others.

⁵ Davis, 83.