

Christmas 2 sermon

2 Samuel 7:8-16 “*What Does a Throne for David Mean for You?*”

Rev. Hernandez L. Daylo, Jr.

He was sitting on top of the world. Successful in all of his endeavors, especially military ones, King David had a military prowess unlike any before him. And there he lived atop Mount Zion he lived in a magnificent palace, victorious and world-renowned. Talk about living the good life – he had it all.

We might picture David alongside those famous, renowned celebrities that seem to have it all, but then blow it all with some foolish scandal. Maybe you recall the sordid tale of David’s sin with Bathsheba, the scandal of sex, lies and murder. But that had not yet happened. At this time David’s heart was still one with the Lord, and he knew how greatly the Lord would continue to bless him.

Isn’t that something, though? When we look at the words of our text, we see that the Lord made these far-reaching promises of a Savior to come from David’s family. He promised to make David’s name great ⁹“**...like the names of the greatest men of the earth.**” And the Lord made those promises, even though he already knew what David was capable of, the horrible way he would behave, as though he could somehow cover everything up so that no one would know the truth. But to think that he could hide it from God?

Oh yes, the Lord knew exactly who David was and what he really deserved. But that’s the light of God’s grace that we shining in the promises he now made to David. “*David, even though you are a wretched sinner, I love you like a son. And one day you will have perfect rest, because I will establish the kingdom of your offspring. David, ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.*”

He was already sitting on top of the world, and if he didn’t think things could get any better – well, they would! We could imagine David sitting there in his palace in stunned silence, overwhelmed by this news – that the Lord would establish a house for him that would last forever! Stunned silence might be one way to put it, but not for the reason we might have expected. Would you believe this was God’s way of saying ‘no’ to David?

Go back to the first scene, when David was sitting in his big, beautiful palace. With every reason to be happy, there was still something weighing on his heart. And when something is weighing on your heart, it’s good to talk to a trusted friend and adviser, which is what David did. ²“**...he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”** Nathan knew what David was thinking, and he could tell that David wanted this not for selfish reasons, but to glorify God who had given him so much. ³“**Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.”**”

Just think about that for a moment. David saw the contrast between his house and God’s house, the palace versus the tabernacle, and it actually hurt him emotionally and spiritually. “*How could I live in a place so lavish while the Lord’s ark of the covenant sits in a tent?*” Just a thought, but do we notice these contrasts between our things and the things of God? To David the contrast was painfully obvious, and for a guy who seemed to have everything, something was missing. He wanted God to have the best temple his people could give him.

Knowing his own heart and the sin that lurked within from the time he was conceived, David wanted to be sure that his intentions were right and noble, not self-serving or self-righteous. The fact that David was even concerned about having wrong intentions was a pretty clear green light. And there was no reason, as far as Nathan could tell, to deny David, who was richly blessed by the Lord, this great privilege of building God’s temple.

The truth is, though, our sincere and honest opinions don’t always line up with God’s will. And in every situation we want to check our decisions on the basis of God’s objective word, not on our subjective feelings. And that can be tough to swallow sometimes, especially when we want to say thank you to God for all that He’s done for us. For David it was, “*Lord, let me build a temple for you that is worthy of your Name!*”

When a pastor makes a home visit with members, sometimes we get to be the bearer of good news, and we look forward to those kinds of visits. Other times, though, it’s not so fun. The next day, Nathan would have to tell David what the Lord had told him the night before, which meant that Nathan would have to say, “I know I told you one thing yesterday, but here’s the thing: the Lord wants someone else to build his house – a man of peace, not a man of war and bloodshed,” (1 Chr. 28:3). Tough words to say, and tough to swallow alright.

No doubt this was something that David also prayed about, searching his own heart while trying to decipher God’s. And he thought he knew; he was *sure* that he knew what God wanted. And that would be a temple as grand and magnificent, if not more so than his own palace. Because that’s what the Lord deserves – the very best we have to offer him. In fact He’s told us that he expects nothing less than our very best, so it’s a little strange, maybe even confusing, to see the Lord

denying David this privilege. He would not allow David to build a temple for Him, something for which he had prayed and was ready to put forth his very best effort.

It makes you wonder, "How can we know if our own plans and prayers are pleasing to God? Sometimes we pray for things that we feel are unselfish and really for the good of His kingdom, and yet it becomes clear that God is telling us 'no, not right now.' And wouldn't it make more sense if God would bless me with greater financial peace and stability, so that I could use those earthly treasures for the good of his kingdom? And couldn't I serve the Lord more effectively if he took away my sickness? Or if God could just smooth out my personal relationships, so that I could be happy, I could be more productive. Why shouldn't I pray for that? And more importantly, why on earth would God say 'no' to those prayers?"

Does God really mean for us to wrestle so hard with these decisions? He's told us to offer our prayers boldly and confidently, that we can ask for whatever we wish and it will be given to us (Jn. 15:7). And in retrospect we realize that 'whatever we wish for' isn't always what God wants. But in that moment when our desires and intentions feel so right, so sincere and so God-pleasing, can't we pray for God's blessing to do our best in carrying that out?

Most definitely. Of course we can pray like that. God has given us every reason to trust not only in his loving will for us but also in his ability to make all things work out for our good. And when we look at the way God responded to David's humble, servant-like intentions, it's a little frustrating. Because if I can't express my love and thanks to God the way that I want to, and God says 'no' to my prayers, what am I supposed to think?

I'll tell you what I think: that maybe my best will never be good enough for God. And even if my intentions are sincere and true, He could still deny me what I pray for. He promises to make all things work out for my good, but what's the point if I can't see how those promises are fulfilled? We talk about faith being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see, but come on now. He could throw me a scrap or something tangible, so that I know he still cares. So that I know I'm doing what he wants. Or maybe God is just punishing me, because I'm not good enough, and I never will be. So why bother any more?

It would have been easy for David to shrug his shoulders and say to Nathan, "Oh well, the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, right?" He could have put on a happy face while inwardly rotting away with bitterness toward God and his seeming injustice. And it's easy for any of us to do the same, to go through the motions of following God, bearing our crosses and grinning, while inwardly we fester in confusion and frustration over the way God answers our prayers and directs our lives. We fail to see God's loving will, because we're too caught up in what we want. We fail to grasp onto God's perfect power, because we're so focused on our own failures.

When God says no, please don't miss it. Don't miss the love that moves and fills every word he speaks to you, including that word 'no.' You may sit in stunned silence, regretting that God denies the deepest wishes of your human heart. You will miss the deepest wish of God's heart, that you live with his peace and joy, to be with him forever.

By God's grace the promise of David's throne was a promise for you, too. God said, "¹¹...I will also give you rest from all your enemies...¹² When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be his father, and he will be my son." Solomon was the initial fulfillment of that promise but only a foreshadow of the ultimate fulfillment. That has to be one of the most beautiful ways anyone has ever said 'no' to someone else!

And the fact is, "²⁰...no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ." (2 Co 1). They are all 'yes,' not because we are so sincere or so well-intentioned, but because Christ has accomplished all that God has promised. God's own Son has taken on human flesh for you; he has taken on the guilt and shame that our sins deserved. He willingly took the punishment that we deserved, not only the floggings inflicted by men, but also the eternal hell and death on the cross. By his perfect life, his innocent death, and his glorious resurrection, Jesus is God's Son, the offspring of David who has established his throne forever.

No wonder David's stunned silence was broken by a prayer of thanksgiving and praise! By God's grace you also know what kind of house and throne God has promised to David, and that this throne means God's love for you. Join together in offering your prayers and songs of praise and thanks to our gracious God, who has sent his own Son to be your King and Savior. Live each day with that peace of forgiveness and the power of an eternal throne established by God himself. You are children of the Most High God, who offer your prayers to a dear Father who loves you and always will. Offer your hearts and lives to the glory of His Name, trusting that he will continue to give you the greatest blessings in this life and in the eternal life to come. Amen