

“Find Hope in the House of David”

Many years ago, a group of dedicated, caring, forward-thinking Christians made a decision that has greatly impacted us to this very day. They made the determination to build a new church building. I wasn't around to hear any of their discussions, but I suspect that they included several points. They wanted a space large enough to fit many people, including the people that were already part of their congregation, and with room to grow. They wanted a building that would represent visually what they knew about God: that he was transcendent, that is over and apart from all of creation, but that he had also revealed himself to people. They wanted a building that would allow them to hear God's Word and to sing God's praises. And so, they designed and built the building in which we are now gathered. That was about 65 years ago.

Many years even before that decision, another faithful believer determined that he would build a building to be a house for God. The believer was the King of Israel, King David. God had richly blessed him, giving him military success. Under David's rule, the territory of Israel expanded, her enemies were pushed back, and the land had peace. David himself was settled into a beautiful palace in his new capital city. David looked at his fine home and compared it to the tent in which the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark of God, sat. And he didn't approve of the difference between the two.

David's solution made a lot of sense. He would build a beautiful, permanent house for the Ark. Essentially, this was a house for God, since the Ark was the visible demonstration of God's presence with the people. He took his idea to Nathan the prophet, who agreed that this was a great plan. “Go ahead with what you are planning,” he told David. But that night, God had a message for Nathan, a message for him to deliver to David. The message was “No. Don't do what you are planning. Don't build a house for me.” God said, through Nathan to David, “I haven't asked for a house. I haven't needed a house. I have a different plan.”

God's plan was to build a house for David instead. The words of our text are a part of this response that God gave to Nathan in order to share with David. These words are rich with God's grace, God's promises. They form a fascinating prophecy about what God would accomplish not only for David, but also for the whole world. These words this morning remind us that we, too, can find hope in the house of David.

Let's take a closer look at the words of this prophecy as it appears in our sermon text. Nathan is instructed to go to David with these words from God: **“This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you.”** No doubt, King David had come a long way. The first time we meet him on the pages of Scripture, he is away from the family tending the sheep. When his bigger, older brothers go off to war in the armies of Israel, David stays behind. But God raised him up. David became a hero in battle, and then in more battles. He rose up through the ranks. He overcame the opposition of Saul, the jealous king, until Saul perished in battle. And David himself became the King of Israel. But God was promising him even more.

God was going to continue to pour out his blessing on David. He would make his name great, like the greatest men ever. Through David, God would continue to bless his people. He would continue to keep them safe and protected there in the Promised Land. David would enjoy rest from his enemies. The people would be at peace. They would no longer face oppression.

It may seem like David would have been disappointed when God didn't allow him to build the temple that he had in mind. But in reality, God had something even better in store for David. At the same time, God wanted David, and everyone else, to keep in mind his grace. David hadn't earned the position of king. In fact, he was anointed king already back while he was the family shepherd. David hadn't singlehandedly defeated the enemies. God had worked through him to accomplish his purposes. And David hadn't earned God's further blessing, God in his grace would shower these blessings on him.

God sometimes gives us similar reminders. When things are going well for us, and we want to take credit for our wisdom, for our effort, for the successes that we have won for ourselves, God's whispers to us through his Word: "I gave you your abilities. I allowed you to have the blessings that you are now enjoying. And any blessings that are in store, these will all come from me as well. **'Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows'** (James 1:17)."

But both for King David and for us, God has more in store than we could possibly imagine. God's promise to David was incredibly profound. Instead of David building a house for God, God would build a house for David. This was a promise that would last beyond David's own life and into eternity.

It would start with David's own son. Even though David would pass from this earthly scene, his legacy would live on. David's son would sit on the throne. He would continue to rule over God's people. And he would build the house for God that David imagined. Solomon, as we know from the rest of Scripture, did succeed David as king, and did build a fine Temple, a permanent dwelling place for the Ark of God.

But God's promise didn't end there. God's promise included not only David's son, but also the distant descendant, the son of David that we know by his given name, Jesus. Listen again to the words of this prophecy and how they weave together promises regarding Solomon for the immediate future and regarding Jesus who would come a thousand years later: **"He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."**

Not only would David have the life of renown with which God had blessed him. He would be the ancestor of the Savior, the same Savior who would give David eternal life. The ultimate fulfillment of this promise is found in the words of the angel to Mary about her son: **"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end"** (Luke 1:32-33).

This one would be punished for the sins of others. This son of David would be punished for David's sins. This son of Mary would be punished for Mary's sins. This man would suffer for your sins and for mine. In doing so, he would build a home for all of God's people, and eternal kingdom.

Find hope in him. Hope in anything else will not last. David's fame wasn't enough. His military success wouldn't last him into eternity, but the gracious promises of God would. The things that you put your effort into, the earthly things that capture your attention will all eventually pass away. But God has built his eternal home. He has kept his promises, not only for David, not only for Mary, but for you and for me.

David's reaction isn't recorded in our text, but after hearing these amazing promises of God, he responded by saying, **"Who am I...and what is my family that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant"** (2 Samuel 7:18-19). We did hear Mary's reaction to the angel's announcement: **"May it be to me as you have said"** (Luke 1:38). And what an example these believers set for us! We hear these amazing promises of God, promises that stretch not only to our lives but also into our eternal lives. We ought to react by simply trusting God to do as he says. We ought to stop depending on ourselves or our efforts. We ought to humbly receive what God is giving. We ought to be amazed at God's grace to us.

There is no doubt that this building is a beautiful house of God where we can join together to worship him. But our hope is not in a physical building. Our hope is in the house of David. We'll celebrate his coming soon, and let us always be prepared for him to come again.

The Text: 2 Samuel 7:8–16 (NIV84)

⁸ “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning ¹¹ and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“ ‘The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: 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. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’ ”