

SERMON FOR 2ND SUNDAY IN LENT – 2-25-18 Our Redeemer

II Samuel 7:4-29 “God’s Will and My Dreams

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Our Old Testament Reading for today introduces us to King David and his friend and pastor, the prophet Nathan. For so much of his life David had been caught up in the business of war and fighting. A courageous warrior, he had carried out some of the most successful military campaigns in Israel’s history. But now he found himself in a unique situation, at least as far as his life was concerned. David experienced a time of rest and peace. We are told in the opening verse of chapter seven that **“the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him.”**

As David relaxed and enjoyed his beautiful new palace in Jerusalem, a palace truly fit for a king, something struck him as being terribly wrong. It didn’t seem right that he should be living in such splendor, in a palace whose walls were lined with beautiful cedar, while the ark of the Lord was kept in a tent. So David began to dream a great dream. He would build a house for the Lord! It would be a house of wood and stone—a permanent place for the Ark of the Covenant, which signified the presence of the Lord among His people, to be kept. There was nothing selfish about this thought; he was not out to make a name for himself. He wanted only to glorify God.

*‘Cedar Chest’ Bowl of Manna 10 - Commandments
Aaron’s Staff*

So David shared his plan for the house of God with Nathan, his good friend and counselor, a prophet of God. Nathan was most enthusiastic in his response to David’s proposal. By all means, he said, **“whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.”** Earlier in Israel’s history King Saul had been given similar instructions by God: **“Once the Holy Spirit has come upon you from on high, do what your hand finds to do; God is with you.”** David’s dream was a good dream; a dream that would glorify God. However, David’s dream and God’s Will for David and the nation of Israel was different.

That very night the Lord handed down a message for David through Nathan. It was given to Nathan in a vision. The message to David was this: **“Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? Did I ask you to do this for me? Is this something I’ve said I’m eager to have done?”** These were not easy words for Nathan to pass along to David or for David to hear. But there was no mistaking what God was saying. His answer was “No.”

It wasn’t that God was punishing David for something in his past. And it wasn’t that God had no use for David. It was just that it was not God’s will or plan that David build a temple for him. God had other things for David to do. **“I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel.”** In effect God said to David, “I’ve appointed you to be a king, not a builder of the temple. You have been given the gift of ruling over my people. You’re a man of war, a brilliant military strategist. I’ve blessed you in such a way that all your enemies have been subdued. But your hands are stained with blood, and I want a man of peace to build my temple.”

God’s “No” to David in one area was not to be taken as a “No” in every other area of his life. God sometimes closes one door that he might open another more suited to us, just as he

grateful for all that the Lord had done; grateful for the Lord's deciding what was best for him; grateful that God would keep his greatest promise.

- Do we do that? Do we thank God for all he has given, and for what we have left?
- Are we grateful for the times he also says "No" to our dreams and closes one door that he might open another?
- We may eat our hearts out over some lack in our life, some dream never fulfilled; or we may accept what God has given and allowed us to do and simply express gratitude to God for what we have.
- There may be times when we spend our days not knowing why God has done this or that in our lives, or allowed certain things to happen in our lives, but in faith we trust the promises of God and firmly believe that He knows what is best for us.

And can you imagine a greater blessing for your life than to be able to see God's purpose or to know that God has a plan for you, where others see, in your circumstances, only tragedy?

- (Joni Eareckson Tada – diving accident left her a quadriplegic in a wheelchair; famous mouth artist; vocalist and author!)
- (Jim Kuehl: Have you thanked God for this?!)

There will be times when we know the pain and disappointment of God's "No," when our dreams don't work out. For those times we will want to remember the response of David: **"Who am I and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"** See the good God has done; don't dwell on what appears to be bad; trust the promises of God **"I will never leave you or forsake you; I am with you always;** when Paul writes: **"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purposes."**

The Bible tells us what God's will is: **"God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."** David understood what God's plan meant not just for him but for all mankind, for you and me. This Son of David would be the Savior of the world who by His perfect life, innocent death and triumphant resurrection would gain eternal life for all who believe in Him.

So we can go ahead and dream our dreams – but we dare never put all of our hope and trust in those dreams even if they are good dreams and good plans; no, rather we need to trust the promises of God and never let go of his greatest promise – the promise of salvation, of eternal life that is ours through this Son of David, Jesus Christ! May God help us to daily put our trust and confidence in Him. **Amen.**