

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

SERMON: II Samuel 7:1-16 (selected verses)**YOUR HOUSE**

Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains. Then Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.

But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell My servant David thus says the LORD: Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt. . . . Have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?"

Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, thus says the LORD of hosts:

(1) I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.

(2) Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore. . . .

(3) Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. . . . And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever

Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that you have brought me this far? And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD. And You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?

It's a joy in life to have a house, isn't it? Whether you own your house or rent it, whether it's an actual house or an apartment, it's a joy to be able to go to your house. If you have been gone for a weekend, or week, or two weeks, it's good to get back to your house. If it's windy, or wet, blistering hot, snowing, or cold, it's good to get back to your house. It's certainly better than having only a car to live in, or only a tent. It's a joy and a blessing. In fact, there are groups that make it their aim to build houses for people who do not have houses.

In our text today, David has in his heart to build a house for the Lord. At David's time the worship center for the Lord was still a tent-like structure, made of skins, fabrics, and curtains. The Israelites themselves had lived in tents for 40 years while traveling from Egypt to the Land of Canaan. But they had long ago gotten rid of their tents to live in houses in the new land. That was 400 long years ago. It didn't seem right to David that the Lord's House should still be only a tent. He wanted to begin construction.

We commend David for not just starting out headlong, but taking the matter to the Lord first—to the Lord's prophet Nathan. Before a congregation starts building a new church, it needs to take the issue to the Lord in prayer. Do any here remember the building of this new St. Luke's structure? Wasn't it an endeavor for which the Lord's input was first sought? The same is true in your life. Seek the Lord's guidance, when decisions are big—new house, new tractor, new pickup, new car, new land, new job, new phase in life—marriage and children, retirement. Seek the Lord's guidance, Also when decisions are small. What should I do first today? How should I go about this? Lord, just help me with my life.. If you act apart from the Lord's will and blessing, it will be a struggle. *Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it (Psalm 127:1). Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that" (James 4:13-15).*

Sometimes God's desire for your life isn't your desire for your life, and He will make that plain. The trip you are planning to Minnesota, just doesn't come together, and so you cancel. The relationship you are seeking to establish with a certain young lady or young man just doesn't blossom out, and you decide to end it. Being open to the Lord's will and guidance is always part of the plan. In our text, David had to back up too. Through Nathan the prophet, David learned that the Lord did not want Him to build a house, a permanent structure, for Him and His worship.

The Lord led David to see a few things more correctly. He, the Lord, does not need a house-- a fancy house of cedar at that. *Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee. How much less this temple that I have built (I Kings 8:34).* Likewise, God doesn't need St. Luke's church building to make Him happy and secure. He is the builder of the entire world and universe! Even for us to maintain this church building, which is something important to do, is not something by which we impress God to show Him how much we are willing to do for Him. This building and House of God, is for our benefit. Here God blesses us with the great news of the change of our status! From that of law-breaker, con-man, and convict, our status has been changed. In Jesus who took the punishment for our sin upon Himself, you and I are given the status of beloved, righteous children in God's family, heirs of His eternal kingdom! This house is about that which God is always giving us and doing for us.

God reminded David: 1) I took you from being a shepherd and caring for sheep and made you king over My people. I have protected you from your enemies and made you great. Do not think, you can do something for me—as if, “Poor God, He needs a house.” 2) I am the one building the future for My people Israel, giving them a safe earthly homeland, giving them rest from their enemies. Do not think you will enhance the security of the people, if you do this for Me. 3) A surprise, indeed! “I'm going to build you a house!” What an unexpected turn of events. And not an ordinary house, either but a house that would stand forever!

The Lord is talking about a *kingdom*. God would give David a long line of heirs who would rule over God's people and God's house, on into the future. As far as a physical house for God's worship, one of David's heirs, his son Solomon, would build a great temple for God. (Solomon would be a man of peace and his kingdom a kingdom of peace. David had been a king of war, one who shed the blood of the enemies of God's people (I Chronicles 28:3). God would have Solomon build the permanent house of worship.) But there was more. God would do even more for David. A future heir from David's own family and body would be established by God on the throne FOREVER over God's people! This is a prophecy of the coming of Jesus the Savior, from the family line of David, who rules all believers not just now but forever in heaven. 1000 years later, the angel Gabriel appeared to the virgin Mary and said, “*You will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom, there will be no end” (Luke 1:30-33).* Jesus comes from the house of David and establishes God's kingdom and God's house forever—which is forgiveness of sins through His death and resurrection, new life from the grave on the Last Day, and eternal life in heaven.

St. Luke's church building and house of God is also not about what we are doing for God, but about what God is giving and doing for us. This house is not about coming to pay your dues, or to do your required rites before God to stay in His good graces. This house is about God's merciful forgiveness for you in Christ. God sees through the veneer and mask of your pride and self-assurance. He knows what you are. There is forgiveness in Jesus, even for you. As Solomon would pray at the dedication of his great temple, *At this place, hear and forgive (II Kings 8).*

David was humbled by the greatness of God's love and mercy. *Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that you have brought me this far? And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD. And You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD. How great is God's love and compassion in Jesus! Likewise we are gratefully humble to hear the Bible say, *By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

Before ending, what about the verse, *If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.* How does that apply to Jesus who never sinned? In one sense that verse is talking about all human-only descendants of David who were sinful and needed correction. But it also applies to Jesus, the holy God-man, who took our sins to the cross and was punished as if He Himself had committed them.

Dear God, Your House is not about us, but about Your great and lasting love for us in Jesus. Keep us there!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---