

Your Throne Shall Be Established Forever
2 Samuel 7
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CenterPoint Church

Read 2 Samuel 7

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”
(Hebrews 4:12)

Introduction

Story 1: In my early years of youth ministry back in the late 1990s in Palm Beach County, Florida, I had a friend named Andy who had a big dream. He had been involved in several ministries as a layman and a businessman, but he wanted to reach the teens and young adults in our community with God’s love while giving them an outlet for their energy. He formed a team of people and started raising money for a huge project that he named “The Rock,” a large park that would offer indoor and outdoor recreation and spaces where teens could hang out, including a skate park, a game room, and various other ideas that they were developing. I was so excited about the vision of this ministry that I brought a team of students on two different Saturdays to help do yardwork and clear the space. About a year into the project, however, the board that Andy had put together convinced him that they would never raise enough money and that there were too many problems to move forward, and he had to quietly shut everything down.

Story 2: After starting a summer missions program at my last church in 2004 by taking a group of teens and adults on a mission trip to North Carolina, I started planning the trip for 2005 and decided to “go big or go home.” We had a family from our church that had moved to Acapulco, Mexico to work with street children, so I started planning and promoting a trip to Acapulco to spend a week ministering alongside them. I immediately encountered resistance from some folks in the church who told me that the trip would be too dangerous and too expensive, not to mention that the church was brand new to summer missions; so why not keep it cheaper, easier, safer, and closer to home? I was determined to press on and kept pushing the trip until we found out that the mission family had decided to move home after one year of being there. All plans were cancelled.

Story 3: Near the end of my time at that same church in Virginia, I started to feel stirrings to be the head pastor of a church. I had always been intrigued with church planting, particularly since my twin brother had planted a church in the early 2000s. I was a lot older and more experienced than he had been when he planted, so I figured that would be a big plus. Turns out that’s not really a plus – they want you young, dumb, and energetic when you plant churches! But I formulated a strategic plan to plant a church west of where our current church was, in an area with very few churches and no PCA church for 35 miles. But one of the hoops that you jump through on your way to church planting in the PCA is the Church Planting Assessment Center, so Kath and I packed our bags and flew to Atlanta to endure three intense days with the church-planting experts. At the end of which they said, essentially, “your gifts don’t seem to align with church-planting, stick with those established churches.” And down went my dream of church-planting.

In case you haven’t figured out the common thread in these stories yet, the theme was “grand ministry ideas that never happened.” The film director, Woody Allen, has a famous quote: “If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans.” That makes sense when we want to tell God

how much money we want to make or how early we want to retire or other “secular things” like that, but does that also apply for these ministry ideas? Doesn’t God want us to do great things for Him? Doesn’t He desire His people to seek first His kingdom and put our efforts into ministries and buildings that will honor Him and draw people to Christianity? The answer that we’re going to see in today’s text is, “Not necessarily. Passion for God’s glory is a great thing; but don’t get too attached to any ministry project that you come up with.” We’ll see the great King David deciding that he wants to build God a house in the new capital city of Jerusalem. You can imagine the wheels in David’s head turning: “I’ve got my capital city, I’ve built my palace, and I’ve brought the ark of the Lord back. What’s missing? Oh, I know, a house for the Lord. A worship center, a temple.” This chapter tells us why that would not happen during David’s reign, as well as recording God’s great covenant promises to David and his descendants.

We start with David’s desire to give God what he himself had -

I. A House Made of Cedar (vv. 1-7)

¹ Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ² 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.” ³ And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.” 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?””

I remember teaching a Sunday School class one time on the minor prophet, Haggai. One of the main themes in Haggai is that God has brought His people back from exile, but they don’t express their appreciation well by having spiritual priorities. The main idea is expressed in Haggai 1:3: “*Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?*” The returned exiles had all built their own houses but had neglected building the Lord’s house. At the end of the class, I asked about how we could apply the book to our lives. Some people made some good points, but not one person saw the connection I was trying to lead them to: we all lived in really nice houses but our church met in a school and we didn’t have a church building. Now, I don’t actually think the book of Haggai should be interpreted as meaning that every church has to have a building to please God, but I thought it was valid to at least raise the question and point out the tension.

Well, here in 2 Samuel 7, David was feeling guilty because he had made that connection of having a house while the Lord did not: “*I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.*” He didn’t actually come out and say that he wanted to build a house for the Lord, but that’s what he meant and how Nathan took it. Nathan had become the prophetic successor to Samuel, and his response to David’s idea was: “*Go... for the Lord is with you.*” Nathan was like most pastors – if someone in the congregation full of spiritual passion brings them a great ministry idea with the money to do it, they’ll probably get on board quickly. If I was Nathan, I would have said the exact same thing: “That sounds great! I love that your heart is on the Lord, you’ve established your capital city and endeavored to please God in worship. Now you want to build a house for God? Sounds like a great plan to me, I’m sure God will bless this.” But as Nathan found out later that night, it wasn’t a great plan to God. He intervened and sent a message to David to head this project off.

2 Chronicles 6:8 says that God commended David for desiring to build Him a house: *‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart.’* But God’s primary point here was that He doesn’t need a house. He identified with the Israelites in all of their wilderness wanderings by travelling with them in a tent. Solomon will acknowledge that *“heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built”* (1 Kings 8:27), and Stephen, the first church martyr, said in Acts 7:48-50 that, *“Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, a the prophet says, ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?’”* God does not need anything, so be careful when you say that you are doing something “for God.”

In the next section, He turns the tables on David and says essentially, “You want to build me a house? I’m going to build you a house.”

II. A House Made Sure Forever (vv. 8-17)

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.

Though the word covenant is not used here, not only does it fulfill the definition of a covenant (a sovereignly inaugurated binding agreement), but it’s referred to as a covenant many other places: ¹

2 Samuel 23:5 – *“For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure.”*

Psalm 89:3-4 – *“You have said, ‘I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’”*

1 Kings 8:23-24 – *“O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart; you have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him.”*

This is not the first covenant in the Bible (I would recommend O. Palmer Robertson’s excellent book *The Christ of the Covenants*² if you want to delve deeper into this area). Some of the others include:

- The covenant with Adam in Genesis 3 established that in addition to the punishments resulting from the fall, God would bless Adam and defeat the enemies of His people.
- In the covenant with Noah in Genesis 9, God promised to never destroy the earth again.

¹ Robert B. Chisholm, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), p. 221.

² O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980).

-In the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17, God promised to make him the father of many nations and to bless the world through him.

-In the covenant with Moses in Exodus 19, God promised land and blessing for obedience, with punishment and defeat for disobedience.

And now the covenant with David promised that his throne would last forever with his descendants sitting on it in a land of their own where they would have rest from their enemies. It would be a house built to last. According to verses 12-13, death would not annul it. According to verses 14-15, sin could not destroy it. And according to verse 16, time will not exhaust it.³ Its permanence is underlined by God saying three different times that it would last forever.

God doesn't say it here, but He says elsewhere in 1 Chronicles 28:3 to David: "*You may not build a house for my name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood.*" Verses 12-13 refer to the one who would build a temple for the Lord - Solomon, David's son who has not been born yet, but whom we will meet in a few chapters. But would verse 13 come true? The first part - "*He shall build a house for my name*" certainly happened, but the second part - "*and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*" seems to fail. 1 & 2 Kings record how Israel split in two after Solomon's reign, with Israel the Northern Kingdom eventually being conquered by the Assyrians and Judah the Southern Kingdom being conquered by the Babylonians. There was a remnant that returned to the land, but after that, there is never a king on David's throne, as we see in Jesus' day that Israel was ruled by Rome and Caesar.

How was David's throne being established forever? The promise did not say that every generation of David's descendants would have a king, but the prophets looked forward to its fulfillment through an ideal Davidic king who would be of his bloodline, a legitimate descendant. This, of course, would find its ultimate realization in Jesus of Nazareth. What was the Virgin Mary told by the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:31-33? "*And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name, Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to 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.*" Romans 1:3-4 says, "*concerning (God's) Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.*" The life and death of Jesus would be the new covenant, fulfilling all of the previous Biblical covenants: Luke 22:20 - "*This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*" God kept every promise to David, culminating in the eternal rule and reign of His Son, Jesus.

The rest of the chapter shows a proper response to God's steadfast love expressed in His future blessings and promises:

III. David's Prayer of Praise and Thanks (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,

³ Dale Ralph David, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity* (England: Christian Focus, 2013), p. 92.

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."

In 2 Kings 20, there is a king named Hezekiah who gave a tour of his palace to men from Babylon. Then he got a visit from the prophet Isaiah telling him that what he had done was a preview of what was to come (vv. 16-18):

"16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord: 17 Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord. 18 And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

That's terrible, right? His sons are going to be captured in a takeover of his country, and they will be made eunuchs to serve a foreign king. Hezekiah must have been so upset and pleaded with God to change His mind.

19 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good." For he thought, "Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?"

WHAT?!? Can you imagine having that kind of reaction to a word of judgment spoken about your own sons? "That's fine as long as I can live in peace and security." What a heartless, warped, selfish thing to say. David was not selfish like that, he was the opposite of Hezekiah. He rejoiced that his kingdom would endure and that his son would thrive. It was important to him to have future generations blessed. So he celebrated in prayer what God had spoken and promised.

David referred to himself as God's servant ten times in this prayer, emphasizing his submission to the Lord's authority. He acknowledged in verse 20 that God knew him well, and that he stood in awe that God had done great things on his behalf. He echoed what God had been saying about His work on Israel's behalf, redeeming them, making a name for them, and establishing them as His people forever. How wise we are in our prayers and lives to acknowledge God's blessings and works in the past and what He promises in the future. Let us model our prayers after David's, thanking God specifically for His work of redemption on our behalf, for the many blessings in our lives of family, of health, of salvation, and blessing. And let us look forward to how He will work in the rest of our lives, in our children and grandchildren, and for our blessed eternal rest in heaven.

The postscript to this story is found in 1 Chronicles 22:2-5, where David gathered workmen and supplies as preparations for Solomon to build the temple. Even though he was forbidden to build God a house, he was so excited that he got everything ready for his son to build. And Solomon built a grand, splendid temple to the Lord.

Conclusion

In 2016 Tiger Woods helped build a golf course near Houston, Texas called the Playgrounds at Bluejack National. For the very first round of golf to be played on the course, two names of junior

golfers had been picked out of a hat to play a round with Tiger himself. So two preteen junior golfers named Cici and Taylor were picked. Taylor Crozier was an 11-year-old boy who was barely 5 feet tall and hit his opening drive right after Cici hit hers. Taylor's uncle handed him a sand wedge, and Taylor said this later: "There were cameras everywhere... and then, having Tiger standing right there. I mean, that was a little nerve-racking." Yeah, no kidding! So he hit it well but thought at first he that it was going to go into a sand trap. But then it bounced on the green and started rolling towards the pin... and then WENT IN THE HOLE! On the 2nd shot ever taken on Tiger Wood's brand new course, an 11-year-old made a hole in one! Tiger hugged him and said, "Are you kidding me right now? How am I supposed to follow that?"⁴

It's got to be a pretty fantastic feeling to impress the creator, doesn't it? To have him stand before us and gush over what we've done. That's a picture of the way that we think we have to impress God. We have to be perfect, we have to make a hole-in-one and give Him something for which He can be proud of us. But maybe our Creator sees things a little differently. Maybe instead of us trying to impress Him and earn His love and grace, He stops us and says, "I've done everything for you. You don't need to impress me, you just need to trust Me and live your life following what I've asked you to do." David wanted to impress God by something great for Him. And God stopped Him and said, "Did I ask you for that? No. And furthermore, I'm not done telling you the wonderful ways that I'm going to bless you and your descendants."

Other religions encourage their worshippers to please their god. And when that god is pleased, then he or she blesses the worshipper and grants power, material possessions, or salvation to them. But the true God, Yahweh God of Israel, does not operate like that because grace does not operate like that. We don't accomplish things for God so that He will accept us, He accomplished it all through the life and work of Jesus. The New Covenant in Jesus' blood says that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of His people, and those who believe in Him, who call on His name, will be forgiven their sins, adopted into the family of God, and given eternal life. Hebrews 8 :6: *"Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant that He mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises."* Then Hebrews 9:14-15a: *"How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Therefore He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance."*

This should never cease to amaze us! The king of God's people who sits on the eternal throne forever gave His life to redeem you and me, fulfilling every covenant in the Scriptures and completing the works of redemption that God required to save His people. Beloved, you are greatly loved by the God of the Universe when you are united to Christ in His death and resurrection. We should say with David: *"Who am I, O Lord God... that you have brought me thus far?... Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you."* Amen.

Benediction

Hebrews 13:20-21 – *"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."*

⁴ Rick Reilly, *So Help Me Golf: Why We Love the Game* (New York: Hachette, 2022), pp. 4-6.