

## 2 Samuel 7:1–17

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[ 0 : 00 ] Again, the scripture text is 2 Samuel 7, 1 through 17. Please remain standing for the reading of God's word. Now when the king lived in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, 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.

And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in your heart. For the Lord is with you. But that same night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan. Go, and tell my servant David, thus says the Lord, would you build me a house to dwell in?

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. 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?

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.

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.

[ 1 : 29 ] 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 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. 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.

He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 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.

But my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be sure forever before me.

Your throne shall be established forever. In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David. This is the word of the Lord.

[ 2 : 46 ] Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Well, good morning, and welcome to Christ Church Chicago. If you don't know my family, we have five children.

That is true. And one of my children developed a rather humorous response to well-meaning individuals who inquired what she wanted to do when she grew up.

To be honest, when they asked, she had no idea what she wanted to do. And so as they probed her about where she was going in life, what she wanted to do with her life, what passions were pointing her toward a direction in life, it was all rather overwhelming to her.

And finally, she just began to respond in the same way every time. Well, my passion is discovering my passion. I'm sure she's not alone in needing some time to see your life unfold and God speak to you and what you're to do.

How about us? And by that, I don't just mean you as an individual, I mean us as a church. Do we know what God has called us to do? Do we have a vision?

[ 4 : 09 ] Interestingly, the reading of the text today actually closed on those words of an actual vision in accordance with all these words and in accordance with all this vision that had come to David from God, Nathan spoke.

The benefits of having a clear vision as a church are many. An expressive vitality accompanies knowing what you're called to do.

A certain energy, a camaraderie of spirit attends the knowing of the mission. A vision statement then, in a sense, enables a church to stay the course no matter how hard it might be or how difficult the road might take or how costly it might be to us individually.

If I know my vision and my vision is clear, I can stay the course in the midst of fog. A clear vision has the capacity to focus the mind wonderfully.

Anyone who's ever tried to write a paper understands that until you know what you want to do or accomplish, the words are few and failing. A vision of the end is important for strengthening your life in the present.

[ 5 : 30 ] It focuses your mind. It bolsters your heart. It strengthens your hands. Yes, vision is life-giving. Vision propels you forward. It provides, in the words of my daughter, our passion.

So, what is our vision? Put differently, what is it that we now think God is asking us to do as one local church in this city?

It's right there, to build up a multi-ethnic and cross-cultural church that proclaims Jesus Christ to everyone and displays the gospel everywhere. Note the verbs, the doing, the activity, to build up, to proclaim, to display.

I want to spend the moments that are before us this morning unfolding the very first line of the vision. Next week, Pastor Nee, who is preaching this week in Ohio, will be back to take us through the proclaiming Jesus Christ to everyone.

And then the third week, Pastor Nee will gather our thoughts around displaying the gospel everywhere. Pastor Pace will do the third displaying the gospel everywhere. And it's important then that we think about this first part today.

[ 6 : 44 ] As I reflected on selecting an appropriate text from the Bible to be read this morning, one well-suited for the task of building up, I landed on 2 Samuel 7, 1 to 17. I do so with a little bit of temerity.

My normal practice for 37 years is to simply expound a text before me. This is a rather topical approach today. But this is the one that I felt most clearly brought us to what we need to be thinking about as a church family.

The reasons are simple. First, the setting. Take a look at chapter 7, verse 1. When the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies.

The setting. The setting. It opens with David now in his home. At rest. From agitation and opposition to his anointing as Israel's king.

You might know that he spent the better part of a decade or more on the run. His local gatherings consisted of malcontents under Saul living in the midst of the forest or on the rocks traipsing around hiding from Saul for more than a decade.

[ 8 : 08 ] You might say that he knew what it was to do church life out on the gravel. He had no home. But by the time we see the setting here, Saul is in the ground.

He himself is dead and David is now underway and he's already asked the Lord where do I go and he's told him to Hebron that burial place of promise and now he's wondering what can I do for God. That's the setting. It's at a time when God had given him rest. In other words, it's the first time in a long time he'd had a time to consider what he was called to do.

More specifically, what vision would be worthy of his efforts. There's a second reason I liked this text. Not only the setting in which he found himself and the setting of our own emerging life here together, but he landed on something.

Take a look at verse 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. He'd landed on a vision.

[ 9 : 16 ] He was now going to do something for God. He was no longer traipsing around the wilderness. He was now going to be on a construction site.

He wanted to build a house for God. He thought that was worthy of his efforts. He thought at this point that he had discovered his passion. And Nathan, the prophet, if you look at it there in verse 3, said to him, Go do all that is in your heart.

The Lord is with you. It sounds great. Wouldn't you like that stamp of approval on what you ever determined it is that you want to do for God? Lord, I'd like to do this for you. The man of God says go, do.

The Lord is with you and all that you want. Now the vision you think would commence. But the third reason I like this text isn't just for the setting or the something that he wanted but how God

interrupted his story.

and how I think he'll interrupt ours. God interrupted David's vision to build him a house with a plan of his own.

[10:19] Can I show that to you in the text just briefly? We're not going to run through the whole text this morning but you begin to see it as verse 11 closes down. God now is communicating back to David and the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.

Verse 12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers I'll raise up your offspring after you who shall come from your body and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name.

I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. All the way down even in verse 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me.

Your throne will be established forever. This is what God says he is doing in the world through David. David wakes up one day and says let me get something done for God.

And God says to David let me tell you what I'm going to get done through you. God's going to work in him and through him to build something for his own name.

[11:25] Did you notice that? This is really interesting to me. even the language here. Do you see the word house and how it's paralleled with kingdom in verse 11 and 12.

Or again in verse 13 he shall build a house and I'll establish the throne of his kingdom. Or verse 16 and your house and your kingdom. This bringing together of the imagery of a house and the nature of a kingdom.

You need to understand what's going on here. They're almost synonymous in God's mind. To build up David's house is to build up David's kingdom. Think of just what happened yesterday in England across the pond.

A coronation of a king from the I believe tell me if I'm wrong the house of Windsor. You don't know? I'm not going to apologize next week if we're all wrong.

But he comes from a particular house. And that house is a family but that family is a kingdom. It's a king over a people with subjects.

[12:35] What God says to David about his own vision for the world is that through David God's kingdom is going to emerge.

And it's going to be a forever king that David himself won't fully realize that he'll die and lie with his fathers but from his own body will be a descendant just generational lineage one who will emerge actually as a king forever a forever king.

Evidently one that's not subject to death which brings us to what we've been doing in Matthew over these last months does it not? How does Matthew begin his gospel?

We've been looking at it together about Jesus who's son of Abraham son of David. this New Testament claim that Jesus the Nazarene is the fulfillment of the promises here so that Jesus himself comes out announcing the kingdom of heaven is at hand that he is the one who's now orchestrating to completion to finality that which had begun to David beforehand that in other words what God was going to do through David in building a kingdom comes true in Jesus as his rule is extended so that you and I who are rebels in this world concerning the things of God can come to submission under the word of Christ and enter into his family as children that we become part of his house God's building up his church you might say the end of Matthew he's going to say Jesus is all authority in heaven and on earth has now been given to me I'm the king and the only rightful response for you and for me is to receive him as king of our life to take the crown off our own head put it down over here and allow Jesus and his rule to reign in our lives and to learn what that means together think of it this is what

God is doing and this therefore should be what we are doing what are we here to do well 2 Samuel 7 he shall build a house for my name Christ church vision statement we shall build up a church where Jesus is known this notion of building something up I know it's a little cumbersome right you don't normally see it in the vision statement what do you want to do with your life I want to build up something nothing more catchy than that no because this phrase this idea captures all of the Bible's story so that in the New Testament time Jesus himself becomes the very place of God in the New Testament writers they'll say that we are all being built up into the place of God the house of God the kingdom of God that you and I when we decide to begin to follow Jesus and learn more of his word and his rule in our lives well we're being built up into the temple of the Holy Spirit in fact

[ 15 : 43 ] Ephesians says and that's why you build one another up in love or 1 Corinthians when you gather together you're to build up one another this idea of a church that is building up the body of Christ is what God is doing in the world he needs to do it for you he needs to do it for me so when it comes to thinking about our vision let's get this clear Christ Church Chicago will be better off if our vision is connected to what God is doing in the world we're not going to set out just on something that we think might be worth doing you know the Bible says people perish for a lack of vision and what they mean by that is it isn't just that they die for lack of vision it's that they begin to run off in all directions for lack of vision and so I hope that you will be energized that there will be a certain animated nature to your spirit to say that you attend a church that you're a member of a church that you're growing to a church that you're going to a church and growing with a church and learning in a church what it means to actually build up the church under the rule of

Jesus Christ summary then we are here to build up the church our lives shall be lived together under the roof of his rule how extensive is that church going to be it's interesting that David is given a promise to be a king over Israel but but it's actually a forever king to whom all the nations come that there's a universality to God's vision for Christ and it's connected actually to an earlier promise that was given to Abraham so Abraham God said I'm going to make you a great nation and through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed it's a universal blessing that God will bring to all peoples through the one king who lives forever namely his son that's the nature of it the nature of the kingdom is that it's universal again

Matthew 28 the great commission Jesus says to his disciples go into all the world right you're preaching the gospel making disciples what does anybody know of all nations all nations and the word there is ethne which is on the screen this idea of ethnicity trying to stay clear to what Jesus is doing disciples are to be made of all nations all people groups it's a universal vision you notice I didn't use the word inclusive I tend not to use words like inclusive or diverse I prefer to use words like we're united from our diversity in Christ that the inclusivity is a universality that's what I mean by that God's vision is universal in nature we who are of disparate and different ethnicities don't celebrate necessarily just all those differences and distinctions what we really celebrate is that in this blood and in this bread in this cup in this one we all come together we celebrate the unity of the body that can bring hatred to rest and love to a family this is universal ethnic think of it you stay around here long enough you are living in a church where our vision statement clearly says that you get a chance to participate in

God's great global plan so how do we think of ethnicities well historically they would thought of it along the lines of nations or languages where are you from what language do you speak those would have been chief characteristics of ethnicities of people groups which means then that our vision is nothing less than to co-labor with God and reaching as many people groups nations tongues languages as he will bring into this place and into this neighborhood just think of even the top five languages what does it mean English the most common language in the world today our mission takes us into the United States it takes us into Nigeria yes it even takes us into Canada what about Chinese speaking peoples it takes us into China Singapore and Malaysia Arabic what if you're from Egypt or Morocco what if you're from Lebanon here today Spanish anyone here from Mexico the Dominican Republic Argentina how about Hindi do you realize there are 1.5 billion people in India all this language centered ethnicities and my guess is many of those that I've just listed have already been named here and more see God's family is being built up among the oceanic peoples great barrier reef God's family is involved with Victoria Falls and Zambia God's kingdom actually moves to Mount Everest on the border of Nepal the kingdom of God has intention to all the French speaking peoples of the Congo and Rwanda I mean the kingdom of God to all the nations is indeed what God is doing I get excited to say that I am part of a family on the south side of Chicago that by way of intentionality is here to build up a multi-ethnic congregation

[ 21 : 51 ] I don't got to take you to the nations though let me just take you to the neighborhood let me talk for a minute what Katie was already mentioning the context that makes our church vision so exciting 2020 census numbers Woodlawn Hyde Park South Shore Grand Boulevard 13% white 75% black 5% Asian 4% Hispanic Latino 2% others Hyde Park is now less white than it was 10 years ago I moved in 26 years ago it's 40% now rather than 46% the Latino population is up 16% from 12% the University of Chicago 38% white 14% Asian 9% Hispanic 4.5% black now I realize that my neighborhood reflects in unusual ways the ethnic racial language groups of the world in

which I live not every church of necessity should have a vision statement that's trying to build up a multi-ethnic church so many churches it would just be impossible given where they are they would want to be involved in the global effort of getting the gospel everywhere but how many local churches are in a context like this not many which actually invigorates me toward the vision not many

I want to be part of that one not every church should actually have that line as their vision but contextually I don't know how we can't I don't know why we wouldn't I'm going to tell you we shouldn't have anything less than this the vision of Christ Church Chicago cannot be less than our desire to become a local church whose membership is made up of multiple ethnicities of those who presently reside in Woodlawn and the neighboring communities we should be a church that looks like the neighborhood in which we live and that will be a powerful testimony to the gospel it means it'll be an international church and a local church it means it'll be comprised of adults who have never been on a plane and others who are on a plane every week build up a church what kind of church a multi-ethnic church also a cross-cultural church now if you look at the vision statement you might actually think it looks a little cumbersome right

I mean do we have to say multi-ethnic and cross-cultural I mean what if you just got rid of one wouldn't we have enough for the other wouldn't it read a little more smoothly get rid of a few words at the same time well every time we took multi-ethnic out and just tried to go multi-cultural we felt we were losing something every time we took multi-cultural out we felt like we were losing something every time we said multi-ethnic and multi-cultural we felt like we were redundant on something so we finally just said it's going to be multi-ethnic and cross-cultural we make distinctions between ethnicities and cultures there are many people groups in the world but their cultural distinctives the things that hold them together their likes their values their family history their way of doing things differs even within nationalities and the fact that the gospel itself is supposed to go across cultures I mean that's what happens in the book of Acts it's going to go from Jerusalem to Samaria to the ends of the earth it's actually going to get to all the earth in that order and you and I live at a wonderful time where all the world is ends of the earth ministry so why not go there and why not actually begin to appreciate the cultural differences that are in our own neighborhood let me say just three things as we bring this to a conclusion this morning on this first one to become a cross-cultural church one it's going to be hard work

I just want you to know that ahead of time there's a reason churches don't attempt this very often especially in this day especially in America especially on the south side of Chicago we live at a time where everybody has retreated into their own ethnic groupings where we've hiding now into our own cultural distinctives where it's so frayed out there that there's been a contraction of willingness and desire to accommodate my life for yours and those differences this is going to be hard work why is it so hard I'm going to tell you because we often consider our cultural identities as more significant to us than our gospel convictions oh I'm going to say it again we hold our cultural identities more closely to us than our gospel convictions and therefore

I'm not willing to untether myself from my cultural distinctives I'll just find myself a gospel church that stays within the purview of my own being you know I think of what that means it means that we all have to learn to displace ourselves for the betterment of others it means that we have to learn to shift our thinking I even think just even musically if I look at the history of our church here you know we have shifted toward or tried to shift toward gospel music which I think is an expression that suits the history the legacy the beauty of this part of the city for many years but that requires something just requires something there's so many ways we could think about this but this is what we will do it's going to be hard work but let me also say we need to begin thinking as a church about cross-cultural fluency that's not my phrase and I'm not sure it is a phrase but how can we be more fluent by way of awareness exposure expression learning from one another who are so different than we are you know we've had families in our church who have picked up for a while and moved to a whole other country like

[ 28 : 50 ] Morocco or somewhere else and they come back and you begin to see the beauty of cultural distinctives in other places and you actually develop a personality that wants to give yourself to those identifying markers friendships and relationships it will include for us this cross-cultural fluency sending global missionary partners who are willing to cross oceans to build up God's family but even more we're going to have to learn how to cross the street in effort to become one family yeah I was at a dinner last night somebody was teaching young people in the

church he'd asked them a few questions he said he was struck that many of them didn't know their neighbors by name didn't know their neighbors didn't know their neighbors didn't know the names of the people that they did business with regularly had no sense of ever sitting down at a dinner table from somebody that was different culturally or by way of ethnicity very little exposure we'll stand in the same line at different stores but rarely do we do what you're going to see here this morning standing in the line to get to the Lord's table oh that we would enjoy the privilege we have in this part of the city of availing ourselves to men and women from a wide ethnic background and cultural distinctives that are enriching and waiting to be absorbed into our own lives hard work cross-cultural fluency intentionality nothing's going to happen without intention we're going to have to build up relationships that transcend our own background we actually got to do it everything we do has to be somehow underneath the banner of it finds its place in this church because we think it's serving strategically and intentionally the means by which we could build up a multi-ethnic and cross-cultural family let me shut this down

I was looking for an architectural image of building up this kind of church just a picture that you could put in your mind of what it is we're called to do something that would bridge bridge the great ethnic divides in our culture bridge the racial despair that's taking place in our culture bridge the cultural identifying markers that we're uninterested in in our culture bridge all the things that separate us today something strong enough to embody the construction of a people for God among all the peoples of the earth and and the one that's in my mind is the Brooklyn Bridge I hope every time you see the Brooklyn Bridge in a movie it'll attach you to what God is doing in the world the Brooklyn Bridge was a suspension bridge that was the first to unite Brooklyn to Manhattan in other words it bridged the divide

Irish immigrants down into the water throwing concrete into casings until it rested on solid foundation and then finally over a year later emerging from the water all those cables each of the bridge has four main cables made up of 19 separate strands each of which has 278 separate wires this interweaving of metal to make one strong cable the Brooklyn Bridge was under construction around 1883 opened on May 24th of that same year it was and remains to be the most brilliant significant architectural feat of the 19th century engineering why not do it why not do it why not be a local congregation that plunges beneath the waters of the gospel and finds itself on solid ground why not give myself to being a ballast of that which would emerge something that the world doesn't see very often why not see the beauty of your strand woven into this wire into that cable into this holding of a suspension that bridges the divide between one world and the next why not make that bridge something that takes somebody from heaven to earth why not make that bridge that which takes you from Chicago to another part of the world why not say we live on that bridge I've walked that bridge I'm part of that bridge this is what we want to build may God give us the strength to do it let me say this there is no better place to begin than right here at this table you and I may have nothing in common but if we have Christ as our Savior we are brother and sister in Christ amen