

# What God Does For Us

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[ 0 : 00 ] Lord Jesus Christ, we have just read how you were present with congregation of people in a synagogue on a Sabbath, just as we are met.

We have read the scriptures just as they would read the scriptures. We pray that as you spoke to them, so you will speak to us.

We ask that as they rejected what you said and could not hear it, so you will give us grace, not to reject what you say, but by your grace in faith to be able to hear it and to obey it.

We ask this in your holy name. Amen. The passage that we're looking at today is 2 Samuel 7, verses 1 to 17.

It's found in your pew Bible, beginning on page 274. And I suspect you would be helped by having it opened at that page.

[ 1 : 25 ] The verse which I want to take as my text is, in accordance, and this is the last verse of that section in verse 17, in accordance with all these words, Nathan spoke to David.

David was the king. David was the king. Nathan was his prophet and spoke the word of God to him. And Nathan had, through the night, been given a message.

And in the morning, he went to David. And in accordance with all the words that the Lord had given him, and in accordance with all the visions that the Lord had given him, Nathan spoke to David.

Well, let's trace this story, beginning with verse 1, to see how these things developed. Verse 1 of chapter 7 of 2 Samuel tells about David dwelling in his house and resting from his enemies.

Rest in the Bible is uniquely a gift from God. And if you haven't had any lately, you probably haven't been going to the appropriate source.

[ 2 : 50 ] And I commend that source to you, that God may give to you, in the midst of your days and your busyness, the kind of rest he gave to David.

Where, dwelling in a house that had been built for him, he was at rest. Now, what happens when you're at rest, is that you begin to think about things that you never have time to think about in the normal circumstance of your life.

Busyness is the way we overcome the necessity of having to think. And so we all are very zealous to be as busy as we can, as much of the time as we can.

But busyness was over. David wasn't fighting. He was in his house, and God gave him rest from his enemies. And as he was there, he thought to himself, as you will read in verse 2, I dwell in a house of cedar.

This is a fine house I dwell in. Well located, and highly prized on the real estate market of the day, I might say. And with some satisfaction, David enjoyed where he was.

[ 4 : 08 ] But there was cloying in his heart because he recognized that the ark of God dwells in a tent. And I dwell in this house of cedar.

So he turned to his prophet Nathan and said, what do I do in this situation? And Nathan gave him practical wisdom. He said, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.

Now some of us come to that point in our life where we have been prospered, we have been given rest, we seem to have got it all together, and we wonder what we're going to do for the Lord because we feel we've done rather better than he has in our world.

We might like to help him out. And so the practical wisdom is, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you. Might I ask you what you would busy yourself with this week if you were to take this practical wisdom and apply it in your life, to do all that is in your heart?

Mercifully, most of us have to do the things we have to do. And the things that are in our hearts get put down for another day and another time. But there is some practical wisdom to doing all that is in our heart, at least to knowing what it would be.

[ 5 : 37 ] And I ask that you might take this day of rest which God has given you and to consider what you might do if you were to do all that is in your heart.

I'm overcome by the temptation to stop here. Wouldn't I be a wise man if I could? But I can't. My agenda demands that I go on. I'm busy about many things.

And I will go on. What happens then, you see, is Nathan goes to his room and spends a very restless night.

And in it, the Lord addresses Nathan and through Nathan he addresses David. He said, Would you build me an ark? Would you build me a house to dwell in?

Well, then he gives to Nathan a sort of historical review. There's not been a word from me, he reminds Nathan, from the time we left Egypt all through the period of our history, all through the period of the judges, have I said to you, Why haven't you built me a house?

[ 6 : 54 ] What? The Lord never asked that question, he reminds Nathan. I didn't ask you to do this.

Why do you want to do it? And you see, I think the thing it points out is very often the thing that we might do in our heart is not the thing that really is required of us.

The thing that we do is not perhaps what God wants us to do. That's the danger of living in a community like this. People are always coming along wanting to do something for the Lord.

Isn't that wonderful? And how much it would be a blessing to be able to say, All that is in your heart, do! And the Lord be with you.

Well, it would be alright to do that, but I think you'd get into trouble. And you'd get into trouble for the very reasons that the Lord explains to Nathan. Did I ever ask you to do this?

[ 7 : 57 ] Why is it your desire to do what I haven't asked you to do? Well, then he goes on and he says, Say to my servant David, Remind him who he is. Remind him that I took him from the pasture.

I took him from following sheep. I made him a prince of my people. I have cut his enemies off from him. And I've made a great name for him.

The significance of David's life, remind him, Mr. Nathan, if you will, has been what I have done for him. Not what he has done for me.

What I have done for him. And that's why it is incumbent upon us as a covenant people of God to be constantly reminded what God has done for us.

And to come and share with one another the good news of what God has done for us and what God is doing for us and to rejoice and to give thanks for that. That's our business.

[ 9 : 00 ] That's how we encourage one another. Not to come together and say, Well, I had it in mind to do something for the Lord, but I've been very busy. And financially, I'm not in a really good position at the moment.

And I do hope there will come a time when this present busyness is past when I may be able to do something significant for the Lord. And I hope, Pastor, you will call on me at that time.

Ah, well, you see, that's not it. What we're here for is to be deeply reminded of what the Lord has done for us, where he has brought us from, how he has established us.

That's what happens when you read about how the Lord, through Nathan, dealt with David. That's what happens when you turn to the scriptures and are by the work of the Holy Spirit, through the written word of God, reminded of what God has done for you.

Say that to David. To my people, say this. I have given them a place. I have planted them. They have a place to dwell. No more violent men shall overcome them.

[ 10 : 14 ] They will live undisturbed. They will be given rest from their enemies. I met a girl this week who came to see me. And I want to preserve the confidence, but problems, psychological problems, religious problems, problems, problems of parents that separated many years ago, problems of unemployment, problems of ill health, problems of having encountered evil in a very sort of disgusting and outward form, problems of her sexuality, all sorts of problems.

A completely rootless person to whom I might say my heart went out and to for whom I long that she might find a place of planting, a place of dwelling, a place of belonging, a place of blessing.

I'm not sure how much capacity she has for that. In the meantime, she's fairly heavily drugged. That gift which she so much needs and which I think is from God and must be given to her.

But God wants us to have those things. That's what he promised for his people. Then Nathan went on to say to David, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.

You see, the whole thing is suddenly turned upside down. you aspire to make a house for the Lord.

If you want to know what's really happening, the Lord is making a house for you.

[12:14] Christ says, I go to prepare a place for you. God has things he wants to do for you. And we in our pride and in our self-sufficiency and in our arrogance cannot come to the place where we will allow him to do for us what needs so desperately to be done to provide for us what it is his good pleasure to give to us.

We still think the name of the game is, one of these days I'll get around to doing something for the Lord. We've lost sight of all that he's done for us.

he reminds David, David, even when you have laid down with your fathers in death, I will raise up your offspring.

There will come forth from your body a king and I will establish his kingdom forever. He'll build the house and I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me.

And when he commits iniquity, I will chastise him but I will never take my steadfast love from him.

[13:31] Surprise, surprise. He will never do it. That's the nature of the God who has covenanted with us. Your house, your kingdom, your throne will be made sure before me.

in accordance with all these words and in accordance with all these visions, Nathan spoke to David. Well, the real problem with this sermon, I tell you, I mean, it has many, but I'll tell you one and that is that it's only a prelude to next week's sermon.

And next week's sermon is David's reply to this. So be sure to be here. Dr. Tom Wright is going to tell you what the reply is. And so I want you to be sure to hear that.

In the meantime, what does God do for David? Let me run down the list. He gives him a house.

[14:41] He gives him rest. He has respect for what is in David's heart. He gives to David a Nathan who speaks the word of God to him. He says to David, your life is to be primarily a demonstration of what I do for you, not what you do for me.

And I don't know, but this passage this morning makes me want to say to you with any eloquence that I can muster, that probably the supreme moment in your life will come when you are willing to allow God to do for you what he wants to do for you and not wasting the whole of your life thinking that you're doing something for him.

The great creative redemptive moment will come when you allow God to do for you what he wants to do for you. That's what David was brought to.

That's what David understood. I think he said to David, remember, you're just casual summer help as far as I'm concerned. I was in business before you came along and I will be in business long after you're gone, so I just need some part-time help from you in the meantime, but the significant thing is what I'm doing.

We turn it all around, don't we, and try and hire God as part-time helps when we get into trouble. It's the other way. well, you will be sustained by my steadfast love.

[16:16] You will know me as a father, knows his son, and a son his father. You will be chastened for your iniquity. You will build me a temple, and I will build you a dynasty.

That's the word the commentators like to me. But David was a dynasty, a heritage that would go on and on and on.

And this morning, you and I, as baptized, believing, communicating members of this congregation, are part of the fulfillment of that dynasty, that promise.

Because we have a king, and our king is great David's greater son. And God has made these promises to our king, even to the Lord Jesus Christ.

promise. And as we are in Christ, these promises will certainly be fulfilled. All these promises. And God's agenda goes on.

[17:23] As the king prospers, so do his people. And the promises are made to great David's greater son. son. He is the son through whom we know the father.

This king said, I want you to pray to my father as though you were his child. And in Christ, we are invited to do that. He is the builder of the temple of which you and I are the living stones.

That is the work he has to do, to build us together to a temple for the praise of God into a company of people.

He is the one that bears the chastisement of our iniquities. He is the one from whom the steadfast love of God never turns. And as we are in Christ, it never turns from us.

He is the one through whom the eternal promises of God are being fulfilled. He is the one through whom God works in us to accomplish his purpose.

[ 18 : 38 ] Well, that's all I want to tell you, really. That these promises, this covenant with David, is a covenant that is fulfilled in Christ.

And all these promises are ours as we are a covenant people of God. And we are in Christ. That's where you belong, in Christ. You don't belong by yourself, doing your own thing for your own glory. What you will accomplish in the three score years and ten that are given to you, with all your endowments and all your abilities, what you will accomplish will not count for a lot, but what God accomplishes in you will count for eternity because it's part of the eternal purpose of God. And the great moment of our life is when we can submit to God and allow him to do in us what it is his purpose to do.

That is fundamental, I think, the real heart of our work in this community.

[ 20 : 02 ] I watch teenage kids grow up in a family, and I say to myself, when will the moment come when they will allow God to do what God wants to do for them?

I see men caught in the stream of success in business, and I say, when will the moment come when they will allow God to do what he wants to do for them?

I see youth and vitality and vigor and all that belonging to a person, and I think to myself, when will they allow God to do what he wants to do in them?

When will they come to that moment? I see people with tremendous intellectual prowess who have gained great significance for their lives by the exercise of that prowess, who are full of doubts and difficulties about the nature of the God who created and redeemed them, and I see them and I say, when will that arrogance let down for a moment that they may see what David saw in this moment? When will God give them a moment of rest from the work of self-fulfillment? That he may begin in them the thing that he wants to do.

[ 21 : 20 ] Whether we can realize this or not, we are in a sense at that moment, as we partake of the communion this morning, we are saying, Lord, do in me what it is your purpose to do for your glory.

Amen. Amen.