

No Easy Life

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Preacher: Bill Kittrell

[0 : 00] The following message is given by Bill Kittrell, Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Church of Knoxville. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

I am so honored to be here. I know launching a church is a challenge, and I trust as we turn to God's Word, it's going to serve you this morning. So look with me to 2 Samuel. I want to plow right into this. Walt said I just have two hours for the message.

So if you're our guest, I'm kidding. But if you'd rather not joke and have fun, let me know, and we'll just not be happy.

We're going to look at the Old Testament, and this is a significant moment in the Old Testament, and has everything to do with our relationship with the Lord.

So hopefully this is going to encourage all of us as we seek to know Him better and serve Him with our lives. This is God's Word. This is God's inerrant, inspired Word.

[1 : 08] So read with me 2 Samuel 7, beginning in verse 8. Nathan is the prophet, the Lord says to Nathan.

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.

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.

[2 : 14] 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.

And He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. And I will be to Him a father, and He shall be to me a son.

And 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 made 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.

Verse 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?

[3 : 28] And yet, this is 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.

And what more can David say to You? For You know Your servant, O Lord God. Because of Your promise, and according to Your own heart, You have brought about all this greatness to make Your servant know it.

And 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.

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, whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods.

And You established for Yourself, Your people Israel, to be Your people forever. And You, O Lord, became their God.

[4 : 38] 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.

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.

For You, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to Your servant, saying, I will build You a house.

And therefore, Your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to You. And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true. And You have promised this good thing to Your servant. 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.

[5 : 38] And with Your blessing shall the house of Your servant be blessed forever. Amen. Amen. I think the main point today is that we would each leave from these Scriptures and from this Word and pray for God to bless the purposes that He has for you, for us.

I want an easy life. And when my desire for an easy life is hindered by someone, I tend to pounce on them.

Much like Walt. I want an easy life. But once a week, I babysit my six grandchildren.

Because I do love them and I want to serve my kids. It's never an easy night, but it's always something we want to do. It's something we enjoy doing. My wife Sherry and I, and we look forward to it.

But one night recently, it was especially not easy. One of the grandsons plugged the potty. And in an effort to unplug it, his solution was to continue to flush it.

[6 : 54] Until he realized, you know what? This isn't working. And he called for help, came running out of the bathroom, I suppose just to avoid drowning. Because when I went in there, water was pouring out of the potty onto the bathroom floor and out into parts unknown.

Now, there are different kinds of water. There's faucet water. There's, you know, bathtub water, raw sewage water.

And remember, I want an easy life. So, you might be patient if a child plugs a potty and flushes it several times, but it isn't easy.

And you have to understand that you have all kinds of desires. And one of them is this desire for an easy life. And you have to know something about the child if you want to be patient with them.

They didn't do this in order to make your life miserable. It was an accident. My grandson isn't like me. I have knowledge that he doesn't have. And to be patient, I have to remember that I know if you continue to flush the potty, you're going to have Niagara Falls in the bathroom.

[8 : 12] But I found myself semi-controlled saying, grandson, I don't want to give it away who it is.

If the potty's plugged, you don't keep flushing it, okay? Flush one time, come get grandfather. You understand? I'm not sure my grandson recognized I wasn't the impatient.

He had violated my desire for an easy life, and I was pouncing on him. But I took him on a special date a few days later. Bought him a special gift, and I think he's happy with me.

Father Love. Yeah. These desires can easily become ruling desires. We want an easy life, and it's very important we underknow the good news is not a promise of an easy life.

There really is no promise for your best life now. That isn't the gospel. That isn't the good news. The easy life gospel is not the gospel.

[9 : 19] So what is the good news? Well, there are promises in this text. This is the good news, and that's what I want to look at.

The Lord is speaking here to David. When he says to Nathan, thus says the Lord. In the ancient Near East, that was the way you introduced a very important communication.

King, a God. Thus says the Lord. You didn't mess with it. So there in verse 8, you shall say this to my servant David. Nathan would say this exactly as the Lord said.

It said it. It's a key juncture in God's redemptive purposes in the Bible. These promises to David are your promises if you're a believer.

If you have trusted in the Son of David for your salvation, these are our promises. So what is the good news? God's promises in this text and David's response revealed to us the good news is number one, no easy life.

[10:37] Okay? That's not the promise, but you will succeed. Number two, no easy life, but God will be with you. No easy life, but finally, you will make His name great.

So let's look first at number one, no easy life, but you will succeed. Look in verse 10. Follow along. I'm going to look at several verses here.

Thus says the Lord, verse 10, I'll appoint a place for my people. Notice the emphasis on God. Verse 11, I will make you a house.

Verse 12, I will raise up your offspring. I will establish His kingdom. Verse 16, your throne shall be established. And then when David's praying, down in verse 27, he prays, for you have made this revelation to your servant.

Verse 17, in accordance with all these words and in accordance with all this vision. In verse 21, he says, because of your promise and according to your own heart.

[11:48] So you see, these are God's promises. This is a vision that God has given to King David. It's a promise and it's for David and it's for his people forever.

It's for us. It's not a promise of an easy life. But his purposes, he has purposes for his people and they will be fulfilled because he's the one doing it.

Look in verse 23, 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 whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt. That's the key word, redemption.

God's promises, his heart, his purpose, his vision, his revelation. I'm going to redeem. I'm going to purchase you by the grace of God for his namesake.

[12:59] I'm going to redeem you. That's what he's done to every believer. In this room. And he's going to bring it to completion. He has a vision for your life.

And he's sovereign. He's powerful. He can accomplish his purposes. And that's why it's so encouraging when you read these verses to know this isn't about David.

It's about God. And you will succeed. No easy life, but you will succeed. Here's what Jerry Bridges says about the sovereignty of God, the power of God.

Divine sovereignty ought to make a difference in our lives. It ought to give us courage when we encounter adversity of any sort, which you will when you try to launch a new church.

It ought to help us to obey Jesus' command. Don't be afraid. And even Paul's command to give thanks in all circumstances. It ought to cause us to live our lives and make our plans in all humility, knowing that only if the Lord wills can we do even the most mundane things of life.

[14:10] Above all, it'll give us the confidence that no plan of God's can be thwarted by either human actions or acts of nature. And that therefore, God is indeed working out all things in conformity with the purpose of His will for His glory and the good of His people.

It ought to make a difference this week that God is sovereign. The good news is not the promise of an easy life, but it is a promise that life is in God's control.

Life is redeemed. Life is purposeful. This is a life where God's plans are for your good.

They are for His glory and nothing can stop them. That's the promises. You will succeed. Back in verse 8 and 9, Thus says the Lord, I took you from the pasture.

David was a little shepherd boy from following the sheep that you should be prince over my people Israel. This wasn't something David accomplished. It was something God accomplished.

[15:24] I took you from the pasture. I've been with you wherever you went. I will make your name great. The emphasis isn't on David. It's on God. It's the Lord who called David.

It's the Lord who elevated him to kingship that made him great. It's the Lord who will firmly establish His people and accomplish His purposes.

This is the good news. Verse 11, Moreover, as you read through this, it's a little like, you know, remember, let's make a deal and the doors, you probably don't, maybe that's a really old show.

I suppose it is. Anyway, the prizes for the game show just kept getting better. And that's the way these promises feel. In verse 11, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.

This is a promise of a dynasty for a king. It's what every king in the ancient Near East wanted. And so, he wasn't talking about flipping a house for David.

[16:36] It wasn't about a building. It was about a dynasty. And he's saying, the Lord will make you a house. It's the greatest promise the Lord can make to him.

I'm going to make you a house. Now, if you go back to verse 1 and 2, we didn't read this, but in verse 1 and 2, chapter 7 began by saying, The ark was where God was. It's kind of like a mobile temple. And that's where God was present in the ark of the covenant. And the ark of the covenant was being housed in a tent. And David was in this nice house. So, he wanted to build a house. house for God. He didn't think it was fair that he had this nice, sturdy house and God was living in a tent. So, the ark of the covenant was in this flimsy tent. So, he was going to build him a house. And Nathan says in verse 3 to David, Go, do all that's in your heart for the Lord is with you. [17:52] I mean, even the prophet thinks it's a great idea. But as we read in verses 5 through 7, the Lord says, would you build me a house?

All the judges, all the rulers, I've never told anybody to build me a house. And I haven't told you you're going to build me a house. You're not going to build me a house. I'm going to build you a house.

That's the way the Lord likes to do things. So, we're not here today doing things for him. He's here doing things for us. We're launching a church so that he can do things for people.

So that we can advance the gospel. This text is good news about a promised king. About a son of David.

Ring a bell. Of course it does. It's about Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of all these prophecies. All these promises God makes in 2 Samuel 7.

[19:06] It's about the Lord. In Acts 2 in the New Testament, Peter is one of the apostles, the disciples of Jesus. What the people in the New Testament did is now they've seen Christ come.

They've seen him crucified. They've seen him raised from the dead. And the Holy Spirit has been poured out on their lives and they get it.

And now they're reading back into the Old Testament with this lens of the resurrected son of David. And they realize he's a fulfillment of all these promises.

And so Peter's preaching in Acts chapter 2 and he quotes Psalm 16 which is a psalm of David. And David says, I saw the Lord always before me for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken and therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced.

My flesh also will dwell in hope for you will not abandon my soul to Hades, to death, or let your Holy One seek the corruption of death.

[20:17] You have made known to me the path of life. You'll make me full of gladness with your presence. And Peter goes on to say David was prophesying about Jesus being raised from the dead.

He foresaw, Peter says, and spoke about the resurrection of Christ. Christ. The reality of Christ helps us understand.

Look in verse 14. The Lord says, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. Now from the New Testament you're looking back and you're thinking he's talking about God the Son.

It's the fulfillment of the promises. The promise, the good news, is not an easy life. Sometimes the grandkids are going to flush the potty when it's plugged and it's going to be bad.

But you will succeed. This is what David said in Psalm 34. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. No easy life. But the Lord delivers him out of them all.

[21:29] You will succeed. God has a purpose for Trinity grace. and you will succeed because of who he is.

Our limitations, our weaknesses, what matters is the promises of God. R.C. Sproul, the late R.C. Sproul, is a great theologian. He said his favorite verse is Genesis 15, 17.

If thrown into a prison and permitted to have only one verse, it would be Genesis 15, 17, my favorite verse. Here's Genesis 15, 17.

This is it. Okay, this is his favorite verse. One verse, that's all he could have. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

Okay. Does that do it for you? I'm thinking more John 3, 16. I don't know about you.

[22:32] These words, he says, set my soul on fire. Okay, he knows something we don't know, doesn't he? It is the passage I turn to when I'm assaulted by doubt, for it fuels my hope and restores my faith.

At best, my faith is frail and weak. And since my faith comes to me from hearing and hearing from the Word of God, this is the Word of God that I need to hear over and over again. When I mention my enraptured feelings about Genesis 15, 17, when I rhapsodize over this text, people often look at me as if I've lost my senses. Why, they ask, is that verse so important? Well, he explains that it's part of a narrative when God is meeting with Abraham and telling him he's going to be the father of many nations and Abraham has never had a kid. He's 100 years old. His wife Sarah's almost that old. He's never had a kid. And God is saying, you're going to be the father. You're going to have multitudes. And Abraham is childless and he's struggling to trust his promises.

[23 : 48] But the Lord just keeps making it bigger. Look at the stars. Look at the grains of sand on the seashore. Abraham believed, but it was weak faith. How can I know for sure?

He wants proof from God. And so the Lord had him cut two animals in two. That's what you did in the ancient world when you made a covenant. Remember, we're looking at the covenant God made with David.

This was the covenant with Abraham. You cut two people. It was called cutting a covenant. You cut an animal in two. It was a signing of a contract. And what's important to understand about Genesis 15, 17 is that the smoking fire pot and the flaming torch is a manifestation of God.

And God is going through those cut animals basically saying, if my promise ever returns void, I will be cut in two. And that's never going to happen.

You will succeed. That's why it's R.C. Sproul's famous favorite verse. Because God is faithful.

[24 : 58] He made a covenant. And the good news is you will succeed because it's not about you. It's about Him. Secondly, no easy life. The good news isn't an easy life, but the good news is, and this is the most important thing about the covenant, is God will be with you.

God will be with you. 2 Samuel 7, 9, I have been with you wherever you went. Verse 22, David's praying, You are great, O Lord God, for there is none like you and there is no God besides you. Verse 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? And then verse 24, You, O Lord, became their God. What the Lord promises and what the Lord does for His people is He redeems them and He makes them His people.

That's the good news. It's not that His people are great, it's that His grace and mercy is great. When Nathan told David, Go and build the temple for God, go and build God a house because God is with you.

[26 : 27] I thought it's a great idea, but most importantly, God is with you. And therefore, you can do it. You know, that's kind of a theme of David's life.

If you read 1 and 2 Samuel, you'll find everybody is always saying about David, the Lord is with him. Saul was looking for someone to serve him and one of his servants said, I've heard about a little shepherd boy, a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, the Lord is with him.

Samuel records, David had success everywhere he went because the Lord was with him. You know, the good news is not the promise of an easy life, but the good news is that the Lord is great. That's what this text is all about. And the covenant is he will be with you. And he made that covenant with the greater David, the son of David.

And if you trust in Christ alone for your salvation, you are united to him by faith. And these promises are for you.

[27 : 42] It's for Trinity grace. And that's why David says down in verse 27, your servant has found courage to pray.

That's how you respond to this truth that God is with you. This promise. No easy life, but God is with you. So you find courage to pray because of God's promise to be with you.

And so David says in verse 29, May it please you to bless the house of your servant so that it may continue forever before you.

Well, the Lord just promised that. But David prays for that. Why? Because Lord, you spoke. And with your blessing, this will come to pass.

So that's my request. When the Lord is with you, there will be blessings. And so verses 18 through 29 are just a prayer of thanksgiving from David.

[28 : 50] Thanking him that the Lord is going to be with him. Eight times in this prayer, he says, sovereign Lord or oh Lord God. It speaks of this relationship that he has to pray.

It's the great treasure of the kingdom. Jesus said, one of the parables, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found he covered up and then in his joy he went and sold everything he had and he bought that field because he wanted that treasure.

And the great treasure is the surpassing value of knowing Christ. It's fellowship with God in Christ. Christ. That's the treasure.

And that's this great prayer of thanksgiving is because of this promise that God makes to his people to be with them. And where he is, there is blessing.

If you came to our house, you went to our kitchen, on our refrigerator, Sherry and I have a picture. It's of her standing in front of a trailer not far from here on what used to be the Little Tennessee River where my dad had a farm and we had, he let us stay in this little trailer on the farm and there she's standing.

[30 : 10] Shortly after we were married, we had moved down from West Virginia. We had driven there with everything we owned. It all fit in a 1973 VW Beetle.

And included in the beetle was a dog. We had a dog. Her first dog ever. And we look at that picture. You know, we don't fit in a beetle anymore. We're about to have our seventh grandchild, four children. And what we recognize is the faithfulness of God.

Now I look around this room and I think one of the greatest things us older folks can tell you, find an old person who's been serving the Lord for a few decades.

And what they will tell you is God is faithful. And when he is with you, it won't be an easy life. But you will succeed.

[31 : 25] And you will be blessed. That's our testimony. I don't think it's been an easy life. If I was running the universe, I'd have done things a little different.

But it's been a blessed life. Amen. That's the promise. And that's why in this prayer, David is thanking God.

Because God is faithful. And finally, number three, the good news is not the promise of an easy life, but you will make his name great.

And this prayer is all about that. Who am I, O Lord? Verse 18, what is my house? Who am I? David is thankful. He's recognizing, look, I was just a little shepherd boy.

You found me. Verse 22, you are great. There's none like you. The Lord says in verse 12, I will raise up your offspring after you.

[32 : 30] I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name. My name. The name of God in Scripture, it's all about his glory going public.

It's about his reputation, his fame. The Lord redeems people, and it's kind of like we might say of someone, he made a name for himself.

The Lord redeems a people, and they bring glory to his name. His name goes public. Everything he does is for his great name's sake, including what he does for his people.

So he's redeemed these people, and he's making himself a name. No other people on earth are like God's people. He chose them.

He chose David. And God's people don't like to talk about themselves. They like to talk about God. In the last week, we've had two testimonies of God's great mercy and grace.

[33 : 48] One, there was a little seven-year-old boy right before Christmas who passed out. They were at a movie theater playing outside, and the little boy passed out.

He didn't know what was going on. He'd had a heart problem, and it got out of rhythm and stopped. And the dad didn't know what to do. They called 911. They came, took him to the hospital.

We'd been prayed for about a week. He was in the hospital. They didn't know that he wouldn't be a vegetable when he recovered.

Last Friday, not this last Friday, Friday, a week before that, the dad was on the phone with the doctor, and he said, when your son got to the hospital, he was dead.

And then the doctor said, it was a miracle. It's a miracle. One, that he's alive, but more than that, there's no effect. The dad and mom gave a testimony at our church last Sunday with the little boy standing by him.

[34 : 58] Thank you, Lord. It's a miracle. I got a text from a young dad with four kids who a couple years ago, I was in the hospital when he received the news that he had stage four lung cancer.

I've just seen cancer wipe people out. My heart sank. And we've been praying for this young man. I got a text this week. No evidence of active disease.

Anywhere in my body. Brain, lungs, heart, liver, spleen, lymph nodes, spine. I don't even know what all these things are. Ribs. All clear. I used to have hundreds of tumors at all those sites.

There's no, the doctor said, there's no better scan. You could not have had a better scan. Now what God's people like to do is draw attention to Him.

We like to draw attention to Him. You know, we need to beware because we live in a man-centered society. And it has an unparalleled propensity for self-glory.

[36 : 12] That's not what God's people do. We make a name for Him. Amen. We transfer the glory to Him. So you watch the NBA. He meant Kevin Durant, obviously.

That's correct about that. Kevin, not, yeah, not Kevin Garnett. But he's a musician. But you watch the NBA.

You watch NFL players. You know, they're ripping off their shirt to show Superman shirt underneath. Me, me, me. You know, they're... Me, me, me.

They got the me monster, man. And if I could play like that, I would too. You know, I'm not criticizing them. But God's people transfer all the glory to God. It is so fun to give God glory for healing a little seven-year-old boy.

I'm so thankful. God created you. If you're a believer, He redeemed you. This is your purpose.

[37 : 16] This is your vision. It's what David did. It's what we should do. It's like when I... I think it's funny. Sometimes I will call my daughter-in-laws.

I have three daughter-in-laws. And I'll call them from Sherry's phone. So they think it's Sherry. And when they answer the phone, the way they respond is like this cheerful, happy voice.

If I call them from my phone, I'm wondering if they're ill, if there's a problem. There's a difference. It's like... And you can tell by their...

It's Sherry! Yes, Bill, what do you want? They're excited about... David is excited about this great God.

And you can tell by his voice. You can tell by his prayer, by what he's saying. He wants to make his name great. The good news is...

[38 : 17] not the promise of an easy life. But it is good news. The Lord has redeemed you for a purpose.

You will succeed. He will be with you. And you will make his name great. So pray for God to bless the purposes he has for you.

You know, in conclusion, I shared this message at my church last November. And immediately after the meeting... So the title of the message is No Easy Life.

Immediately after the meeting, my son and I, one of my sons, went backpacking. And we went to one of the most remote areas in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

A two and a half hour drive. Canoe paddle across the lake. Hike into the campsite. It was brutal.

After getting up at five that morning, preaching at church, and then heading out to go backpacking.

[39 : 17] And I'm an old man. And he's supposed to take care of me, by the way. When we got there, we parked the canoe, and he decided to bushwhack to the...

I don't bushwhack anymore. Decided to bushwhack to the campsite. And if he hears this, he will disagree with some of this. But it's my story.

Long story. Before it was over, it was dark. I had a 50-pound pack on my back. I was trapped in a rhododendron jungle.

Eventually, we had to jump off a cliff down to the creek, which was out of banks. At one point, he's in the water, face first with his backpack on. And I thought, this is a survival situation now.

We had to cross the creek. And of course, we each looked at one another at one point, and said, what? There's no promise of an easy life, okay?

[40 : 27] I had just preached this message. And here I am. I'm like, okay. I think the Lord's just saying, yeah, that was a good word this morning you shared. It's true. There's no promise of an easy life.

Life is difficult. But there is a promise that he is faithful. You will never one day say, wow, I really missed out.

I lived my life trusting the Lord. What a mistake. Nope. One day, you will have a picture on your fridge, and you will tell how God's been faithful. And that's especially true for this church that you're launching.

Thanks for doing this. I think the Lord wants to encourage you. He's going to be faithful. Amen. Lord, I pray for Trinity Grace, as I do regularly. I pray for these folks in this room and what they're doing here in Athens, Lord.

And I pray that you would encourage them from your word. I pray they'd hear your promise. I pray they'd know you're with them. I pray they'd know that you'll never forsake them. And your purposes for them don't depend on them.

[41 : 33] It depends on you. Amen. And you will be faithful, and you are able. And we give you glory today, in Jesus' name. Amen. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com.