

2 Samuel 7:18-29

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[0 : 00] Good evening, everybody. This one. As Matt said, my name is Peter Alman. I'm a guy from the area.

My wife and I lived here. This is going to our fourth year for three years. I come to the church here roughly two members, roughly one.

So, it's not my first time to reach. I have a little bit of a bigger flow there. I've reached a number of servants.

Well, I think it was in the best place of city and the church today. I'm going to die here. And tonight we're going to look at 2 Samuel still. Chapter 7, verses 18 through 29.

And before we dive in, please try to ask people to see us here tonight.

[1 : 03] Help me now. Let's just pray. Let's just forget that. I don't really feel like praying right now, honestly. And actually, now that I think that I have this sermon to preach, I really should be focused on that.

So, let's just pray later. I mean, why not? What's the problem? I know it must be scandalous. He can't do that. I mean, this is church.

Doesn't he know this is church? He can't just stop. Well, why not? How is it any different from any one of you different than how I act on a daily basis? Different than all of us.

Than any of us. I think, friends, that we have a problem with prayer. I think some of us hate prayer. We hate praying. You say, how dare you say that?

I love praying. Do you? Do you love praying? He has some nerves, Jesse. I love prayer. I'm a Christian. What do your actions say?

[2 : 05] Actions speak louder than words after all. The aliens observed you for a week, where they conclude, wow, Miss Herklin really loves his or her God. He talks to them all the time.

Almost certainly, no. You know, it's fashionable to reference the sterling prayer life of African nations and of Chinese Christians facing regular and rigorous persecution.

I've never been to either place, but I have lived here my life, and I can say with much confidence that American Christianity has a prayer problem. We don't prioritize it, and we don't practice it.

And one could reasonably conclude, therefore, we don't like it. In fact, we may downright hate taking time to apply the solitude with the Lord. More corporate time with the Lord as well.

Ask any average American pastor who's here tonight. How do prayer meetings are fair? You're likely to hear a month or two shorter. Prayer meeting? What is a prayer meeting?

[3 : 12] Oh, right, that thing. Well, we did away with that ages ago. No, no. We've actually incorporated a new contemporary service with a killer band and awesome coffee. Our numbers have never been better.

And that is the trend, friends. That is the truth. Prayer meetings are of dying freely in American Christianity today. Many churches, if not most churches, have done away with it.

We don't love praying, friends. Our hearts lead us to that which we love. Why don't we love prayer? We're too busy. It's too hard. God knows I love Him.

He knows what I need. Anything and everything to proclaim to God, no. I won't be spending the time with you today. That's how much it matters to me. I love and love, Lord.

Much love. But no, not today. What we have before us this evening, someone who did love praying. Someone who in many ways exudes the very standard of our prayer life that should be.

[4 : 10] And that person is David, of course. Our official text again is 2 Samuel 7, 18-19, or 29 rather. A prayer from David to God that should be a model for all of us, a true ideal.

We will be looking at some other aspects of chapter 7 as well. And specifically exploring three broad points. When David prays. Why David prays.

And perhaps most importantly, how David prays. My prayer is that as we look closely at the circumstances and content of David's prayer, we will be convicted to reaffirm and reconsecrate our priorities and our time.

That our hearts will be deeply inclined to God and to draw near to Him by a rest and salvation. Point one. When David prays.

Looking back to the beginning of chapter 7 and even further, chapters 5 and 6, a number of notable things have occurred. Chapter 5, verse 6. We read that the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, You shall not come in here, but the blind and the lame will repell you, thinking David cannot come in here.

[5 : 29] Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. It's interesting to note that this is the first instance of the word Zion in all of scripture, and the only place it is found in Samuel.

Later coming to denote all of Jerusalem and eventually all of Israel, we can begin to appreciate the theological significance of David's coming into the fullness of his kingship on Mount Zion.

Jerusalem, the city of peace. A clear signpost among many of David's architectural connection with Jesus. Later, in chapter 5, verse 17, we are told that the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel.

All the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of him and went down to the stronghold. The Philistines also went and deplored themselves in the valley of Perhideon. So David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines?

Will you deliver them into my hand? And the Lord said to David, Go up. For I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand. Take a moment to appreciate the sheer amazement of that statement.

[6 : 39] In so many instances, God has taught his people and his servants with hard lessons and hard truths. He's always with them, of course.

But oftentimes, he can appear far off, allowing his home to suffer and endure myriad trial and tribulation before ultimate deliverance. Not so here.

The conversation between God and David, an amazing statement in and of itself, is almost banal. So you're going to get them for me, Lord? Obviously, David.

Samuel continues. So David went to Baal-peres them. And David defeated them there. Big surprise. And he said, The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like a breakthrough of water.

One could call this a high point in David's life. In fact, we've come to find, and I think it could be rightly argued, that this early period of David's kingship, after these initial battles, represents a high mark of David's peace and prosperity, finding rest and favor with God.

[7 : 46] In the next chapter, chapter 6, David brings up the Ark of the Covenant, builds a home for himself, and enjoys a much-needed respite. And we find David in the opening of chapter 7, conversing with the prophet Nathan.

Now it came to pass, when the king was dwelling in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies all around him. But the king said to Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwells as I tend to hurt his cedar.

You see, a cedar house was something very special. In the same way that cedars are prized with today for beautiful, working homes, it was even more so in the time of David.

You'll often hear the phrase in scripture, The cedars have led the home as a cherished commodity to all people of the near east. For David, the cedar home represented something luxurious and aromatic, a kingly abode.

Not so in David's mind, on God's rest and place. For the Ark of the Covenant lay amidst a fabric, a tent, tattered and torn, war-weary and road-weary.

[8 : 53] And David very much desired to rectify the oversight, to provide for God a dwelling place fit for the divinity, a holy temple. Nathan, of course, sees no problem with the endeavor, encourages David to do all that is in his heart, for the Lord is with him.

But not so fast Nathan, and not so fast David. The Lord's thoughts are, of course, far above our own, including David and Nathan, and has no intention of having any will for him.

God bless him. We hear God speak to Nathan in verse 5, Go and tell my servant David, Thus says the Lord, Would you build a house for me to belong? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time

that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabard at all.

Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, Why have you not built in a house for cedar?

Now therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel, and have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies before you, and made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.

[10:19] Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more. Nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them any more, as previously.

Since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies, also the Lord tells you that he will make you a house. There's a lot to unpack here, and the sermon is not focused on these earlier verses primarily, but it's important to understand what precipitates the prayer David prayed has been in the chapter.

We have this beautiful declaration of what God has done for his people up to this point, and almost like an addendum tacked on at the end. Oh yeah, and tell David, he doesn't build me a house, I build him a house.

Curious, because David has just finished explaining in detail the beauty of his narrow cedar home. But we of course understand that a house house means something.

It's not a temporal home, it's an enduring home that we will have. Amen. We can discern for ourselves that David has been through a series of fortuous events. He's riding high, for lack of a better term.

[11:30] And then we hear God speak and confirm to David through him all that has been done for him. And all that will be done for him. Going so far as to highlight David's holy station as a shepherd prior to his rise and knowing that.

And that, friends, is the occasion for the beautiful prayer found in the later verses of chapter 7.

That's the when. And I ask you, do you pray when things are going particularly well for you?

Do you cry out to God when you're feeling good? When everything is coming on basis? Do you quietly and soberly seek out the Lord when you ponder the station you found in and the station you find yourself in now?

I know that I know. And I think this is one of the primary problems with prayer and the attitudes about prayer in this country. Whether we would consider it or admittedly do consider it.

Outside the context of Sunday morning worship, prayer is a largely negative thing or rather spurred on primarily through negativity. This is reinforced by the culture around us, the media, movies, and television.

[12:40] Have you ever heard the aphorism? There are no weakness in boxcalls. It exists for a reason. We reach out to God when things are bad. When terrible things have happened.

When tragedy is struck. Whether big or small. My child has a high fever. Lord, please heal her. I need you to do well on this exam. God, please give me the strength and mental fortitude to see it through.

Most recently, our country experienced another terrible shooting. This time in rural Oregon.

Everyone in the public, led by the President himself, declared that our prayers are good for families.

How often have you seen the President come on air to say, We've had a great fiscal quarter.

Unemployment is down. We just grew up. Peace is being achieved throughout the world. Let's turn to the Lord now in prayer.

Of course it doesn't happen. And it wouldn't happen. And we are very different. When things are going well for us, prayer is the last thing on our minds. Heck, when things are bad, they need to get really better.

[13:43] Before we are genuinely moved to examine our prayer lives. And David stands before us in stark contrast to this brand of pessimistic prayer. A fair weather for us.

Lord, when things get really hairy, I'm going to need you to have my back. But when things get better, I'm sorry, I just can't fit in. We need to do this part in prayer during times of relative ease as in times of strife.

And what of our station, our positional relationship with the holy and righteous God is David so different than us? You might say, of course he was. He was a king. He was a man after God's own heart. He has his own covenant, the Davidic covenant. I can have my own covenant. That giant covenant isn't a man as far as I can kill. We'll look closer for this. God is swift to point out just where David was when he found him. Youngest of a group, better men. Tending sheep in the field. Not worthy enough to even be presented by just into Samuel. [14:43] God not only raised him up to overcome his enemies, strong nations, and out and unredeemed of the nation of Israel. He promised him that through him the Messiah would come and all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

He would build him a house made of things far more precious than the secret. Friends, that is where God found you. Lowly and unworthy. He called you by name. He redeemed you. He anointed you and he brought you into adoption as co-heirs of Jesus himself. To rule and reign with him forever. There is no greater truth in this world. There is no greater reason to be on your knees daily in prayer to God.

We know from other texts, name and psalms, that David was swift for many times a week. That is of course true and appropriate for us as well. But we find here that even in the best of times, our hearts and our minds should be one of the things of God.

And we should never be inclined to him, praying to him ceaselessly. And now that we've considered when, we should turn our attention to the why.

[15:48] And that doesn't seem like a silly question, very lofty, very philosophical. Why do I pray? Why does David pray? I can assure you that it's practical. There are practical implications for it.

You know, as a young, budding, Calvinist, baby Christian, I struggled heavily with prayer. In fact, prayer is my most enduring struggle. Having graduated from baby Christian to the wise and siege before you, I still find myself scoffing at certain types of prayer.

Like the long dinner prayer. Is anybody familiar with the long dinner prayer? You know the one where halfway through prayer, people are like, you know, peering through one eye to figure out what their first bite is going to be?

Or who took the bigger piece of chain? Or the Father God prayer. This one's a little bit more local. I grew up in Massachusetts. Anybody who's been around the Central Western Mass?

It's a picture of the prayer with the, you know, the Worcester accent. The Father God, you just basically insert the phrase of Father God as many times as basically I normally allow. Father God, tonight we pray Father God.

[16:54] We're in the rules. Father God, Father God, we know that you are the Lord, Father God. And it just kind of goes on like that. Both my cousins and my sister went to Liberty University and would relate to me how students were constantly praying and laying hands on anything and everything.

A test, locking your keys in your car, being caught holding hands. We can laugh if we want. But the truth is, it speaks all to us, our sincerity and commitment to God and God's word.

Whenever we catch ourselves doing that, all prayer, no matter the occasion, when generated from a place of earnest love of God and desires to be in communion with Him, is to be praised and encouraged.

And as we turn back to David, we're going to find some sobering truths about our need to follow on our face before God continually. As we've already mentioned, things have been going very well for David, not only that.

David has taken it upon himself to make sure that God is the next featured guest on MTV Prips. God is going to get this sweet house. David is going to see it. But it's not the events that went to that point, the battlefield victories for all the secret houses of Lebanon, that prompted David to understand the question, why do I pray?

[18:10] It's God's message through David again that promised a glorious prayer at the end of chapter 7. Looking and starting in verse 11, V ■ battles ■ aiopi scales which they call to understand the Amen ■ ah chasing him with the rod of men and the blows of the sons of men.

But my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took from Saul, and saw my room from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you.

Your throne shall be established forever. According to all these words and according to all this vision, so did he spoke to David. You know, the continuity that we find in Scripture has always

astounded me.

It's always been my personal source of internal apologetics whenever my faith is shaken. The way in which God's promises and the way he brings to fruition those promises are the same from Genesis to Revelation.

And as God speaks through Nathan, we can follow. Like the river in Ezekiel that flows from the holy throne, God's promise from the garden straight through Scripture.

[19 : 31] Going back to Genesis 3.15, speaking to the serpent, I will put my pen to you between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. He shall crush your head, and you shall lose his heel.

Verse 21, Also for Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them. I will build you a house. Genesis 12, speaking to Abraham, Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.

I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse them who curse you. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Here in 2 Samuel, speaking to David, When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set them for a seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for our name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Why does David fall in his kingdom prayer? He plainly tells us in verse 27, For you, O Lord of Moses, God of Israel, have revealed this to your servant, saying, I will build you a house.

[20 : 40] Therefore your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to you. David is awestruck at the promises of God to him and to us.

The same promise from Genesis through David right on through to the cross. That promise is the gospel of his kingdom. That God would choose me, set me apart, save me, and bring me to himself to enjoy him forever.

What can David do in the face of such monumental grace? He just got finished wiping the blood off his blade, declaring that God would now be properly worshipped.

God simply says, no, David. Remember what I've been saying all along. I'm going to carry you. I'm going to build you a kingdom, a kingdom without a pen.

I'm going to fill it with undeserved people just like you, and I'm going to finance it with my own blood. One can marvel at the heinous audacity of the world to declare that all religions are basically the same and that all paths ultimately lead to God.

[21 : 50] Only Christianity worships a God that condescended from perfection to become one of us and to shed his own blood for the wicked, a spotless lamb poured out for a wasteland through jealous idolatry and malice, and finally taking the route of the just and holy God upon his sinless self so that we can live.

What a scandal. For among the muck and mire that is the world's idolatry, God stands alone with Christ at his right hand, declaring I am, and this is my beloved son, whose blood is shed for you. Don't bring me gifts. Don't bring me houses. I bring to you, freely, grace and mercy untold. It's the gospel of Jesus Christ that rebels the air to pray and must compel us as well.

And look at David's reaction in verse 18. Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that you have brought me this far? He had those beautiful words he would write in Psalm 8.

What is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you visit him? Okay, verse 2. What is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man that you take care of him? We often say that God's people in the Old Testament are actively looking forward to the cross, while the New Testament Church explains the reality of the kingdom of God through the events witnessed on the cross.

[23 : 11] So that the cross is always central in Scripture, whether looking at Genesis or Revelation. And David remains true in this principle. While we consider why David prays, and by extension, why should any of us pray, we are mightily confronted by the content of David's prayer.

He has just been carried through monumental events, first the survival of a calculated assassination plan carried through by his own countrymen, and then the triumphant over multiple nations, all bigger than Israel.

And yet, as David prays, it is always forward-looking. Rather than focus on what God has just done, he is consumed by what God is going to do.

You're going to establish my house forever, and it will be a blessing. David is consumed in looking forward to the cross, even if he can't fully understand it yet. I will build you a house.

Therefore, your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to you. Do you not believe in your residence of that very same house? You are. We are.

[24 : 14] David prays at the end of chapter 7, because the promise of the gospel of the cross compels him to. And what's our excuse? Finally, we must consider how David prays.

When I began to honor this question, I was most struck by the way in which David prays in comparison to your average and temporary prayer. It made me feel that even if I could look to all of David's actions to easily understand why he's a man out of bounds on the heart, when examining the way in which he prays, there can be no doubt.

The same year that David and I got engaged, my now father-in-law, who was pastor of the Selene Church for over 35 years, gave me a great Christmas gift.

It was a collection of Puritan prayers called the Valley of the Bishop. Some of you should have heard of it. Being an entry reader and a lover of great literature, I was immediately smitten with the sheer belief of the Puritan prayers.

And it's sad, because Puritan's often had an image of being cold, downward, passionless people.

Read the Valley of Bishop, and I will smash that direction faster.

[25 : 26] After reading through the book, I couldn't escape the remarkable differences between these prayers and the ways in which people pray today. They were glorifying and edifying to God to a fault, almost completely focused on who he was, his character, what he was doing, and what he was willing to do.

With very little me, me, me, and I, I, I, which I think much prayer has been common. And when I looked closely at David's prayer at the end of chapter 7, I felt almost like I was reading the Valley of Bishop again.

Look at that prayer, and I'm going to start in verse 18. I'm going to add a nephesis. Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that you have brought me this far?

And yet this was a small thing in your sight, O Lord God, and you have also spoken to your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?

Now what more can David say to you? For you, O Lord God, know your servant, for your words of sin, and according to the Lord on the heart, you have done all these great things to make your servant to make your servant for them.

[26 : 40] Therefore, you are a great, O Lord God, for there is none like you, nor is there any God besides you, according to all that we have heard that our heirs. And who is like your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth, who God want to redeem for himself as a people, to make for himself a name, and to do for yourself great and awesome deeds from your land, before your people, that you redeem through yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods.

For you have made your people, Israel, more, very little people forever. And you, Lord, have become their God. Now, O Lord God, the word which you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as you have said.

So let your name be magnified forever, saying, The Lord who hosts this is the God over Israel. Now let the house of your servant, David, be established before you. For you, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, I revealed this to your servants, I will build you a house.

Therefore, your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to you. And now, O Lord God, you are God and your words are true. You have promised this goodness to your servant.

Now, therefore, let it please you to bless the house of your servant that it may continue before you forever. For you, O Lord God, have spoken it and with your blessing let the house of your servant be blessed forever.

[28 : 04] I don't know if anybody was counting. That's 44 times in 11 verses that David mentioned you, O Lord. His prayer is just one giant you, you, you.

I just stopped right there. That's the answer to question three. How does David pray? You, dumb, and firm. But alas, there is a good word to be said. Why don't we like to pray like this?

Why are our hearts not behind to worship God through prayer this way? It's often so inward. Lord, I'm struggling with this. Please help me with that. Lord, we need your help.

Help us. Even David couldn't excuse the prayer that way given the recent events of his life. Lord, you have carried me through and sought to raise me up.

You have caused nations to fall before me. Now please establish my house forever as you promised me. He doesn't pray that way because it would ultimately be blasphemous. It would assume that somehow any of this is about David.

[29 : 09] And despite some of David's misgivings, I think we can conclude that ultimately David gets that none of this has to do with him. And subsequently that primarily forms the how of his prayer.

Lord, you have done this because it pleases you. You will carry me through and you will see your kingdom established forever. I invite you to pray this way. Practically speaking, I invite you to pray with the understanding that it's not about you either.

It's about God and who he is and what he has done and what he is going to do. Start examining your own daily or weekly prayers. I hope to be calm daily and start praying this way.

What if each of us started the day with, Lord, you have chosen me and retained me. I'm going to love you and serve you today. You are going to carry me through and see your will done because your word always accomplishes what it sets out to do.

You will protect me and my family and work all things in our lives for good because your word declares it. Your word is the only truth. You are going to come again and consummate a new heaven and new earth and we will be in more presence and worship you forever.

[30 : 24] That's how David prays here in chapter 7 and that's how we should pray always. So in chapter 7 David is in a unique position where God has ordered all things for his favor and his rise.

David is king over God's people and nothing could be going better for him. The when? Despite his countless blessings and despite David's desire to do for God, God on heaven, he will continue to do for David and his people, he will build them a house, he will establish them as a holy nation, he will see it have no end and see it bless the whole world and he will do it unconditionally through sheer grace, mercy, and love.

David is awestruck at God's grace for the gospel. The why? Finally, David is compelled to do nothing but fall in his face before almighty and glorious God and declare you, you are, you have done, and you will do the how?

Friends, let's now go to God and learn his prayer. Please pray for me. Lord, I thank you for giving us your servant David as perhaps the best example of the Jesus himself in scripture for how we should pray and why we should pray and when we should pray Lord.

We come to the national forgiveness that we don't pray to you enough, that we don't give you the time that you really deserve, that when we do come to you Lord it's because things could be going better for us.

[32 : 01] I think we understand now Lord that when everything is going great that's the best time to find quiet time to come and give you praise, to let you know Lord that we understand that you have accomplished everything according to your will, that you have saved us through grace, that you love us because of nothing that we can do and that you want to save us, bring us to you and allow us to enjoy you forever and ever.

Pray Lord that we go to this place tonight praying that way, recommitting our lives to be regular prayers into leading our families and setting examples for our co-workers and our community to be Lord.

Pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.