

2 Samuel 7:1-17

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[0:00] Good evening, church.

Fletcher Reed is the name of a character from a movie called Liar Liar. Now, Jim Carrey plays Fletcher Reed.

He's an attorney who is not only a professional liar, but keeps on making these empty promises to his 10-year-old son, and only to leave him with disappointments and broken heart.

All his son wants to do is spend time with his dad. He wants his dad to come to his birthday party.

He wants to play catch with him, with his brand-new catcher's mitten. But Fletcher Reed keeps on breaking his little son's heart.

[1:11] And that was a sad part of this movie. And I think we can all relate to this story, because I'm sure we have our shares of promises that we kept, and also our shares of promises that we broke.

And also, unfortunately, some of us here may have experienced what this little boy have experienced, promise that was made by loving father or mother, and yet, at the end, it was just broken.

Tonight, we'll see when God makes his promises. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we thank you that you gather us here tonight.

There are so many places that we could have gone to, and so many different things that we could have been doing right now. But, Lord, you moved our hearts, and you called us to be here.

And, Lord, it is better to spend one day at your house than a thousand elsewhere. Lord, as we look into your words, and as we are about to receive your words, Lord, I pray that you will prepare our hearts, open our ears to hear your words.

[2:47] So, Lord, pray all this in your precious name. Amen. Last Sunday, in 2 Samuel chapter 6, we learned that the ark of God has returned to Israel.

And King David and the people of Israel celebrated this glorious and joyous occasion. Now, tonight, we'll continue our study of 2 Samuel chapter 7, verses 1 through 17.

Please turn with me to page 259 in your pew Bible. Page 259, 2 Samuel chapter 7, verses 1 through 17.

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 to all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you. So, King David expresses his desire, and Prophet Nathan knew exactly what was in his heart.

[4:27] King David wanted to build a house for God. Bible doesn't tell us whether, you know, this came from, because he's now living in a palace, you know, built with the cedar.

So, I don't know whether he's feeling a little guilty that God's ark is in a tent. I'm in a huge, beautiful palace. The Bible doesn't tell us. But, Prophet Nathan also agrees with King David's intention.

He's like, hey, that sounds good. You got my approval. Go ahead and do it. The Lord is with you. Now, God has something completely different on his mind.

So, that very night, God tells Nathan, now you got to go tell King David what I'm about to say. Continuing on at verse 4.

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?

[5 : 36] 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?

King David thought it was a good idea. Prophet Nathan thought it was a great idea. But, as Pastor Matt read for us earlier, from Isaiah chapter 55, his thoughts are not our thoughts.

And, his ways are not our ways. Isaiah 55 verse 8 and 9 tells us, for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

[7 : 00] Don't we experience this sometimes? You know, we think we're about to do something great for God, and yet God has something completely different, a whole different plan for us.

And a lot of times, we do not understand, and we cannot comprehend that at the time. But maybe later on, in retrospect, you see clearly why God did it, certain things at a certain time, His ways.

So, here, all David wanted to do was build a house for God. Instead of having the ark of God sitting inside a tent, he wanted it to build a nice house of cedar, and move the ark into the new house.

But God tells King David, I have something completely different plan for you. And also, in Isaiah 66, verse 1 to 2, God tells us, thus says the Lord, heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.

What is the house that you will build for me? And what is the place of my rest? All these things, my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord.

[8 : 32] God created the universe. God made everything. So, he's telling King David, I never asked for a house of cedar. And on a side note, the ark of God had a carrying poles.

So, when God gave specific instruction in Exodus, when they were building the ark, God never designed the ark to be mounted in some place, like, fixed.

He put two carrying poles to be carried. Just a side note. And, before we look into the actual content of the promise that God is about to reveal to David, let's look at the three aspects of God's promise.

Now, we're reading verses 8, and second half of verse 9. 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. Here, God tells King David, it is God who initiates the covenant.

[10:13] It has nothing to do with King David. God is the one who pursued David. It's just a gentle reminder of King David's humble beginning.

God is telling David, you are a young shepherd boy watching sheep, but I pursued you, made you king over my people, and I was with you in every battle, every war.

I cut off your enemies. It is God who initiates the covenant, and it is God who pursued David. He pursued and he is pursuing us with his unchanging and life-giving love.

It is he who loved us first, not we loved him first. Imagine with me a, imagine you are a young baseball player.

You have been playing for a minor league and now you had your huge break. Now you just got picked from the major league, so now you are playing in a major league as a rookie.

[11:34] But, you are struggling. You can't hit. You keep striking out. And to make things worse, at a critical moment, you just made a double play.

Often times, you are walking back to the dugout with people booing you. now you are scared. You are hearing rumors that they are not going to renew your contract.

Matter of fact, they will probably send you back to the minors. So, he is scared. He does not know what to do. And every minute, free time he gets, he is practicing.

He is practicing his batting skills. He is practicing, practicing. And then, out of blue, there is a voice from behind. Son, relax your shoulders.

And for a second, he thought he heard a ghost. Like, who is here? And when he turned around, there was Carr Ripken Jr. watching him. And he just told him, son, relax your shoulders.

[12:38] Now, he is just completely blown away. Why is Carr Ripken Jr. here, watching me practice? And then, to blow him away even more, Carr Ripken Jr.

tells him, son, I have been watching you since Little League. And I watched you, you know, every chance I got, I watched you throughout high school, I watched you college days, and I watched you while you played for the AAA.

And now, I'm here to help you. And this player is just speechless. I mean, the legend, the Hall of Famer, he wants to be my mentor.

Carr Ripken Jr. tells him, you come here every week, I will teach you all my secrets, and I'll make you into the next Carr Ripken Jr.

This is just a secular example. But how surprised would this player be? He had no idea.

[13:44] He had no idea the legendary Carr Ripken Jr. watched him since his Little League days. And now, in midst of his struggle, he offers, I will mentor you.

He didn't initiate anything. He didn't write letters to Carr Ripken Jr. and say, please mentor me. He showed up out of nowhere, and he says, I will mentor you. God pursued us.

Just like here, God is pursuing King David. God initiates his covenant, and God pursues us with his unchanging love.

And in second, God's promise is not contractual. You know, we make promises, but a lot of times, you know, our promises can be contractual.

Like, if I do, if you do ABC, you do this for me, and I'll do the same for you. But if you don't do ABC, then I don't have to keep my end of the bargain. That's promise, but it's more like a contract.

[14:48] But God's promise to us is not contractual. It has nothing to do with our performance. Just like we read here, God pursued David.

he made him a king over his people. He fought all David's enemies, and it had nothing to do with David's performance.

I'll give you an example of a contractual promise. It's a funny story. Last year, my son asked me to buy him a new video game system.

I said, okay, as long as you bring home all A's this semester, then I'll buy you a new video game system. It was like a contract.

You do this, I'll do that. At the end of the semester, he brought home all A's. Now I have to do my end of the bargain. I looked up pre-owned certified video game system.

[15:51] There is such a thing. Pre-owned certified video game system, and I bought him a video game system. But lately he's been complaining to me that, you know, the Asian parents, Asian parents have a whole different grading system.

So I say, yeah, what's that? And my son tells me, to you guys, A means average. B means below average.

C means can't come home. D means, no, I'm sorry, C means can't have dinner. D means don't come home. F means find another family.

I said to my son, well, no, that's not, I'm glad this is being recorded. I said, no, that's not your parents' system. That was your grandmother's system, my tiger mom.

so, the point I'm trying to make here is that it has nothing to do with our performance. God's grace to us is a gift.

[17:06] Not because we achieved certain level of a spirituality. Not because we achieved certain amount of deeds. It is his grace to us a gift.

And third, God does not make empty promises. He's not like Fletcher Reed. Fletcher Reed in the movie makes plenty of empty promises.

Just like what Pastor Matt read for us earlier, I'm going now back to Isaiah 55 verses 10 and 11.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth.

It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

[18:21] So when God makes promise, his word does not return to him empty. So before we look into his actual, the actual content of his promise with David, the three aspects, it is God who initiates and God pursues us.

Secondly, he does not look at our performances. It is his sovereign love. His grace is a gift to us and God does not make empty promises.

Now let's look into the promise that God makes to David. Verses, second half of verse nine, starting, 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.

[19:43] 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 forever.

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 soul, 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.

When I was reading this passage, the language was a little confusing. He talks about David's son, son, he talks about kingdom lasting forever, he talks about his son committing iniquity, and then he talks about I'm going to discipline him, and then he talks about your kingdom is going to last forever.

[21 : 20] It's confusing. So, if this is a paper, a promise, one page is completely a promise for the near future, like King David's son Solomon is going to build a temple for God, and so on.

The other page is full of eternal language. Your kingdom lasts forever. Your throne will be established forever. If I had two people, one on each side, one is reading me the eternal language, and the other one is reading me non-eternal language, I will be confused.

I think it's somewhat like that. The language, his promise of immediate future, few generations down the road, and his promise of eternal kingdom, which is fulfilled by Jesus, it's written together simultaneously.

So, when you read this, you can get confused. Like, for instance, like verse 14, it says, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

This is a familiar promise, because in Hebrew chapter 1, when they describe Jesus, the same language is used.

[22 : 48] I'll be a father to him, he'll be a son to me. So, first, let's separate this language into eternal promise, and the promise of what's going to happen to David, his son, and his descendants.

Going back to verse 9, the second half of verse 9, 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 I will plant them so that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more.

So, God cut off all David's enemies, and they begin to enjoy peace and prosperity. And then, goes down to verse 12, when your days are fulfilled, and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Now, here, he's telling David, your son, the wisest man ever lived, is going to build a temple to honor my name.

God and you see that happening a little bit later in the book. And what is this language about when he commits iniquity, verse 14, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men.

[24 : 36] Well, David's descendants, as you study the first and second kings, first and second chronicles, they start worshiping idols, they become rebellious, they don't always keep the law.

So, God raises sometimes different enemies to discipline them, like a father disciplines a child. So, this is all about what's going to happen right after you, and also a little bit down as your descendants, you know, do this and that.

God made a similar promise to Abraham, 14 generations before David. In Genesis chapter 12, God makes promise with Abraham, and basically the promise contains three blessings.

One, God tells Abraham, look at the stars, can you count the number of stars? I will make your descendants as numerous as stars in the sky.

Second blessing, he tells them, I am going to make you a father of a nation. So, a nation is born, and that nation is Israel. And then the third, the third blessing is, through you, Abraham, all nations, all families, all ethnic groups will be blessed.

[26 : 11] Now, you know, him having descendants, him becoming father of a nation, yes, that is a non-eternal promise.

All nations, all people getting blessed through Abraham, that is an eternal blessing, that's a spiritual blessing, blessing, which is fulfilled by Jesus.

So, at this point, you may ask, but what do these promises, which were made thousands of years ago, have to do with us today?

today? Well, that third blessing God gave Abraham, all nations will be blessed through you, it has everything to do with us today.

God sent his son, Jesus, to die for our sin. and he gave us salvation. So, those who believe him, believe my son, will have salvation.

[27 : 29] And that promise is still ongoing as the gospel is preached here in all different parts of the world. Just like God said to Abraham, all families, all nations, all ethnic groups, will be blessed through you.

Going back to the promise that he made with King David, the eternal promise that your kingdom will last forever.

Your throne will be established forever. No human kingdom can last forever, but Jesus' kingdom will last forever. Again, God sent his son to die in our place.

He resurrected, he overcame the death power of sin, and now his kingdom will last forever. So God's promise to David is fulfilled through his descendant, Jesus.

And again, what does that have to do with us today? Well, you receive Jesus, you have salvation. But there's a little bit more, actually a lot more.

[28 : 52] Let's turn to John 14. It's on page 901 in your pew Bible. I would like us to look at two more passages.

pages. Please turn with me to page 901, John chapter 14, verses 2 to 3, and then we'll also read verses 15 through 18.

Here Jesus tells us, in my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you, where I am, you may be also.

Isn't it funny? King David wanted to build a house for God. Here Jesus tells us, I have a house, my father's house. There are many rooms and I'm going to take you there.

[30 : 03] Let's look at verses 15 and 18. He promises, Jesus promises, if you love me, you will keep my commandments and I will ask the father and he will give you another helper, the Holy Spirit, to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him, nor knows him, you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans. So, you know, after you receive Jesus and, yes, I'll be with him eternally in his kingdom, but what about from now till we get there?

Are we going to be like orphans? Is Jesus telling us, I die for you on the cross, my job's done, okay, see you, you know, when I see you. It's not like that. Jesus said, I will not leave you as orphans.

My spirit, the helper, Holy Spirit, will be with you and he will live inside you. God. And what does this mean?

Let's look at another passage. It's in Acts, it's 9, page 911, 911 in your pew Bible. Acts chapter 3, Acts chapter 3, verses 22 to 23, and then we will look at verses 25 to 26.

[31 : 46] Verse 22, Acts chapter 3, verse 22. Moses said, the Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you and he shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.

So once again, through Moses, God is telling his people, I will raise up a prophet like Moses.

He's talking about Jesus. And you should listen to him when he comes. Verses 25 to 26, you are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers saying to Abraham, now we're going back to the covenant that he made with Abraham.

and in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. God having raised up his servant, he's talking about his son Jesus, sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.

By turning every one of you from your wicked ways. other translations says turning every one of you from your sinful ways.

[33 : 23] I think we all struggle with sin, the idols that we have brought into our lives.

You know, secret sin that we flirt with and then you keep doing that and you do that enough it becomes your habitual sin become addiction and then you keep on doing it then it has grip on you.

It makes you captive to sins. And I think some people call it a besetting sin. It makes you powerless because the sin has such a grip on you you may be confessing every day but you just cannot be set free from that sin.

Verse 26 God having raised up his servant send him to you first to bless you to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways sinful ways.

This is God's promise. We struggle we try to be set free but we just cannot do that with our own human strength.

[34 : 49] Cling on to God's promise. As we learn today that his promise he doesn't make empty promise and he's pursuing us right now.

He's pursuing each one of us with his unchanging life giving love. A grace that's a gift. So when you try to break away from this with your own human strength or with seven steps of this or seven steps of that you just cannot sometimes you cannot break away unless God's power in you through Holy Spirit breaks you loose.

then you will turn away and get set free. I just finished reading John Newton's biography really really some parts were very hard to read especially when you know when they talk about John Newton is the man who wrote the words for the famous song Amazing Grace and in few minutes we're going to sing that song but before he tasted God's amazing grace his life was in complete disgrace as a slave ship captain there was so much atrocity that was committed in the ship and he called himself the most vile wretched person and yet after he received the good news the gospel his life started to change

God changed his life completely around from being the most vile person to a preacher and then it didn't stop there John Newton played one of the key roles in abolishing slave trade in England along with William Wilberforce so my brothers and sisters in Christ as you leave here tonight just if there's one thing one thing you take away please please take away Acts chapter 3 verse 26 that he made this promise to us that he will bless us to turn away from our wicked ways and like Jesus said there are many rooms in our father's house and he's not gonna leave us like orphans and the

Holy Spirit dwells in us let us pray Lord our God we thank you for your promise and Lord we thank you and praise you because you pursued us you loved us first and you kept your promise you sent your son to die in our place so that we can have eternal life and then you didn't just stop there you said I will not leave you like orphans but my spirit the helper will dwell in you to turn you away from your wicked ways so Lord we thank you and we praise you for all you did and what Jesus did on the cross for each one of us in Jesus name amen