

King and Kingdom

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[0 : 00] So are you feeling the pressure today with Ian down there? Yes, it's okay. I didn't want to point it out that Ian's been here all morning season. So we're in 2 Samuel, chapter 7.

So the way to find that is if you go towards the beginning of your Bible, first five books, past Judges, past Ruth, past 1 Samuel, and then all the way to 2 Samuel.

There is an easy way to find books of the Bible. And that's just to go to the contents page and look them up. You know, sometimes the pastor can feel under enormous pressure not to turn to the contents page because everybody should assume that he knows where it is.

But here we are, 2 Samuel 7. Beginning at verse 1, and we're going to read the first 17 verses. So 2 Samuel, chapter 7, beginning at verse 1.

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.

[1 : 30] And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you. But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan. Go and tell my servant David, thus says the Lord, Would you build me a house to dwell in?

I have not lived in a house since the day I brought you up, the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent from my dwelling.

In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, Why have you not built me a house of cedar?

Now therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be a prince over my people Israel.

And I have been with you wherever you were, wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

[2 : 40] 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 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 when 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 his 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, and 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.

[3 : 52] In accordance with all these words, in accordance with all the vision, Nathan spoke to David. Well, may God bless both the reading and the explanation of his word to us this morning.

Please turn again to 2 Samuel chapter 7. I don't know how many weeks off it is until Christmas Day. I'm assuming it's something like four or five. Four, okay. The pressure is now just elevated all of a sudden. I don't know how you feel about preparing for Christmas.

And this may seem like a strange passage to talk about Christmas from, or even to talk about Christmas still in the month of November. The interesting thing, however, is however much time you need to prepare for Christmas, Christ prepared for it for thousands of years.

2 Samuel 7 is about God giving us a glimpse of the Christmas present he's about to give us. David had to wait a long time.

[5 : 07] He didn't actually get to see the present. He would die. Even his son Solomon would pass away. We weren't born at the time when Christ gave the gift, but we are recipients of the gift in that we belong to Jesus Christ now.

In other words, God only had to prepare for one Christmas. Unlike us, we have to prepare for many more. And sometimes we can lose the sense of what the true meaning of Christmas is.

Well, I'm going to demonstrate to you this morning, hopefully from 2 Samuel 7, that God is in the business of giving and not in the business of taking.

And sometimes Christianity can be described in terms of, well, what must I do for God? And this passage is about someone who wants to do something for God, only to then be told, no, it's not you who will do something for me, but I who will do something for you.

And that makes a big difference. Christianity, if we put it in the words of Jesus Christ, said, I have not come to be served, but I have come to serve.

[6 : 18] In other words, he's taking the very words of God to David here. Are you going to do something for me? No, you've got it the wrong way around, David. I'm about to do something for you. Jesus Christ comes on the scene and everybody assumes that he is there in order to be served as God.

And why wouldn't you? Why shouldn't God be served? But Jesus, in his own words, looks down to us and says, I have not come for you to serve me, but rather I have come to serve you.

In fact, this whole passage is about what God is about to do for you or has done for you and simply waits for you to take hold of it. And that should be incredibly encouraging for any of us here who feels that we haven't got anything to give to God.

Well, the good news is he doesn't want anything. He wants you, but the way that he gets you is by giving you his son. Okay? God doesn't want anything from you.

He wants you, but he doesn't want anything from you. And the way that he gets you is by giving you his son. And so these few verses can be divided into two parts.

[7 : 31] The first part is the obvious one, what David wants to do for God. And the second part is what God would do for David. Okay? So part A and part B.

Part A, what David would do for God. And part B, what God will do for David. Now the interesting thing here is to pay close attention to the position that David is in when he wants to do something for God.

We shouldn't ignore it because not everybody wants to do something for God and it's explained here why. In fact, we're about to see that David wants to do something for God and Nathan, even though he's a prophet, doesn't prophesy over David.

He simply gives David a bit of advice. Saying, well, if your heart's right, if your heart is in the right place, then go and do whatever your heart desires. If you want to do something for God, do it out of your heart.

Now it's only later does God come and speak to Nathan and says, no, Nathan, you know, go and tell David that he's not to build the house, but I will do it for him.

[8 : 37] I want you to think about that as we move along. Now God makes a promise that he is going to build something for David. Now we can all see the problem with that in that if God is going to build something for David, then don't you have to be around to enjoy it?

Right? If you're going to receive a gift, don't you have to be there in order to get that gift to enjoy it? Well, not when it comes to God, not when it comes to the eternal God of Scripture.

You see, when Christ died on the cross, all those who believed by faith in God then, Christ's power retroactively saved them in the past. And the same way he saves us in the future, even though we never saw Jesus face to face.

And so the issue here is God is about to do something not just for David, but for a whole number of people in the person of Jesus Christ.

Christmas is the gift of God to us. The king is born in Christ Jesus. A kingdom has come when Christ comes.

[9 : 50] And with this king and with this kingdom also comes the building that Christ will build or that God will build. Doesn't it seem strange that God, all of a sudden, goes into the architecture business?

God is saying to David, I'm going to build you something, and we're thinking, well, what will it look like? How many bedrooms will it have? Perhaps your thought has even gone to John 14, we're in my father's house for many mansions.

Is that what God had in mind? And the answer is no. What God has in mind is what Peter says in his letter. And this is what he says.

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you, you, believers, yourselves like living stones are being built up into a spiritual house.

The building that God promised to build is the church. We are the very promise of God fulfilled. So David here wants to build this wonderful thing for God that over time will just crumple with weather and time and everything else.

[10:59] And God says, no, I'm, we're going to do something much bigger than this. I'm going to build a house, and I'm going to build it with people. And therefore, people throughout every generation are going to be part of this house.

Now, the foundation of this house is Jesus Christ. He is the cornerstone. Everything else is built on Jesus Christ, if it is to last.

So the promise that God makes here is I will build, I will give you the best present ever, and the present will be, you yourself will be the building that I will build.

I will give you a king, I will give you a kingdom that will last forever, and I will give you a building that will last forever. You are that building. And so we read these passages, and we have to read them carefully, lest we end up thinking this is speaking purely of the material.

It's not speaking of the material. It's speaking about you. So let's divide these into two halves. What does David want to do for God, and what does God want to do for us?

[12:10] Now, this bit needs to take a little bit of care and attention for this reason. David is sitting pretty, okay? David has a lot of money. David has been given a lot of wealth from God, he doesn't have any enemies that the Lord hasn't dealt with.

He is sitting comfortably. David is living the good life. He has it good because God has made it good for him. God has made him a king over the whole people of Israel.

Now, here's the lesson, and this lesson happens time and time and time again in Scripture, that when things are going well and we are feeling blessed and we are sitting pretty and everything's quite comfortable, only then do we feel that we want to do something for God.

You see the problem. Only when I get my house in order, okay, do I then think about what God wants. Now, this lesson plays out time and time again.

When I'm okay, when my bank account is full, okay, let's build. Let's do something, okay, because any decision I make outside of that doesn't affect me. Now, this is played out again with Jesus and Peter up the mountain with Elijah and Moses, and all of a sudden you get the disciples saying to Jesus, hey, let's not worry about those down below.

[13:36] Let's stay up here. Let's pitch some tents. Let's build, okay, let's stay. Things are going well for us. Let's keep it this way. And Jesus has to say to Peter, just like he has to say, God has to say to David here, no, that's not what it's about.

But why is it, why is it that when we are in a position where we are comfortable, we then think out of our comfortable position, we will do something for God? God's not interested.

And God's not interested for a very simple reason because David doesn't have anything that God didn't give him. Okay? Think about that. David doesn't have anything that God didn't give him.

Okay? Let that resonate. Let that sink down into your heart because it's easy for us to think, well, I'll do this for God when? I'll do this for God when I have or when I have this.

But that's part of the problem. God isn't interested in when you have things or don't have things because we have what we have and we don't have what we don't have by ordained by God.

[14:45] I'd like a lot of things that God hasn't given me. Okay? But I know why I haven't got them because God hasn't given me. And I know the things that I do have, I only have because God has given them to me.

In other words, David seems to be forgetting how he got to where he got. How he got to where he is. And we sometimes get ourselves into the same position that all of a sudden I got to where I have by my own hands, by my own intelligence, by my own making.

As though, look at what I've done for you, God. And it's just not true. It's not that you're incapable.

It's not that you're not given huge amounts of gifts. But it is to recognize that we all get to where we

get to because of what God has done for us.

That's really important. What David seems to be forgetting is that God of the whole creation cannot be contained.

Okay? The God of the whole creation cannot be contained in a house. And even if the house was to represent God, as though I understand God won't live here, but it is a representation, God has to deal in Jeremiah's day because people thought that their security was in a building and so God took the building away.

[16:06] He destroyed the temple. So God cannot be contained because God is the creator of the whole world. In fact, he even says in verse 7, did I ever ask for a house to be built for me?

I mean, did I ever want that? What did I do to give you the impression that I actually wanted you to build me a house? I want no such thing. In fact, all the way back, he says, would you really build me a house?

As if, come on, do you not understand, David, that the reason you have what you have is because I gave it to you? I need you to think about that. The next thing that the Lord has to say to David to make him truly realize is to remind David where God took him from.

So I want to read these few verses to you. Verse 6, 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.

But I have been moving about. Verse 8, Now therefore, thus says to my servant David, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be a prince over my people Israel.

[17:24] You see the problem? Well, not a problem, but you see the issue. Now, Susan's dad's a farmer, and sometimes I like putting wellies on and pretending that I can farm.

I walk into the field for the big sticks and the cows, normally behind Alan, my father-in-law. He waves and I pretend that I'm doing it, or I sometimes stand in front of him and he makes all the actions behind and I think that the cows are doing what I want them to do.

But there's a big difference between being a shepherd in this country and being a shepherd in Israel. In this country, sheep are herded. You get these sheep dogs and they herd the sheep into pens and the sheep, you know, you sort of get them to the left or to the right or wherever you want them to go.

Now we don't have sheep dogs, you have dogs, you have quad bikes and whistles and you bomb around the field and you get them in. But in Israel, if you ever look at a shepherd in Israel, no shepherd walks behind the sheep, not one.

All shepherds walk in front of the sheep and the sheep follow the shepherd. When Jesus says, my sheep, hear my voice, okay, he's drawing on the old shepherd picture of sheep following the shepherd.

[18:46] But isn't it interesting that God, when he describes David, doesn't put it that way around. David is described as one who doesn't have the sheep following him but he follows the sheep.

Why would you do that? Why would you explain the future king of Israel, the one who will shepherd people, as one who's following sheep? Well, God is trying to point out to David, look at where I took you from.

Right? You were a young boy still learning your craft and you, instead of shepherding these sheep, were following them around. God is playing on the point that shepherds are meant to lead sheep but you in your early stages, when I took you from the flock, when I took you from shepherding those sheep, it was the other way around.

And now look where you are, David. You're the king of Israel. So what do you think you can do for me? It's humbling, isn't it, to think that we are where we are by the good grace of God.

And actually, we shouldn't be embarrassed about that. We shouldn't think, look at what I've done for you, God. But rather, our attitude should always be, God, look at what you have done for me.

[20:00] And that's not something to be embarrassed about, it's not something to shy away from, rather it's something to recognize that we have what we have, and we are the people we are because of what God does with us.

And it's right, even out of a good heart, to be able to say, well, you know, I want to do this. Let me just give you a modern day illustration.

You go out to the supermarket, and one of your little children is with you, and there's the shopping on the till, and you know that it's going to come to quite a lot of pounds, and the child pulls a few

pennies out of their pocket and says, mum, I'll pay for it this week.

Now, you know, out of that, that's a pure heart, right, that they just want to do good, that they see that you need a few pennies, they don't see quite how many pennies, but they recognize that you need these pennies to pay for this week's load of food, and out of their good heart, they offer you these pennies thinking, this will do it.

Okay? They're doing nothing wrong, but it's insufficient. It's insufficient. And in the same way, David has this wonderful desire to do something for God, and even though it comes out of a heart to want to honour God, at the end of the day, it's insufficient.

[21 : 19] What can I give God? What can I do for God who gave me everything in order to give back to him in the first place? It's humbling.

We're not being told off. We're not being told off. We're simply recognizing the blessed position that we have in order to do anything for anybody. So, having dealt with David, now let's deal with God. God's purpose here in 2 Samuel 7 is to tell you, to remind you, to get you to understand that God is not about taking something from you, but God wants to give something to you.

God promises that when David dies, verse 12, that when he lies down with his fathers, and that's him speaking of his death, that God will raise up from David an offspring.

Now, here's the important thing. God will establish, if you read it carefully together here, God will establish his kingdom, this heir of David, when your days are fulfilled, verse 12, 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.

[22 : 49] Now, David should have understood that there's a problem there, because he's about to die. And when God makes these promises, we have to read them on two different levels.

We have to read them on the natural level, and then we have to read them on the level of the promise. So the natural level is that Solomon will come, and Solomon will build a temple, and that temple will last for a while.

But then God destroys his own temple, because people have begun to trust in a building, rather than trusting God. So God gets rid of the building. The moment anything, that if we begin to enjoy the blessings of God more than God, we are being like the prodigal son who wants what the father has without the father.

That's a pretty big sin. To want what the father has without the father is to enjoy the gift greater than the giver. It's to enjoy what you have greater than the one who's actually given it to you.

Solomon did that. And because Solomon got in the position where he was the wisest man on earth but didn't live by his own wisdom, he then enjoyed the gifts that he had more than he enjoyed God, and so God took the gifts from him.

[24 : 09] He took everything from him. In fact, it even says that David, when he was in old age, couldn't even keep himself warm in bed. Everything, these men, though great, often failed in old age because their hearts begun to wander.

So even in Solomon's day, these promises fall short. So God can't be speaking of Solomon because his kingdom didn't last forever. God promises a kingdom that will last forever, and you get to Solomon thinking that it's going to be him, and it doesn't last forever.

So there's only two conclusions. Number one, either God didn't keep his promise, or number two, the promise isn't this. Okay? God didn't keep his promise, or the promise isn't this.

And so there's a pattern in the Old Testament you need to recognize, and it still exists by and large generally today, that in the Old Testament, if the people had judges when they did, if there was a good judge, then generally the people were good because he kept people in order.

But if there was a bad judge, then people could more or less do what they want and say they were bad because the bad judge didn't care, right? He's sitting pretty, he has everything that he wants.

This then plays into the kings that when you have a good king, the people are good, generally, because he's able to keep them and motivate that kind of goodness.

[25 : 32] But when you have a bad king, he doesn't care, and so the people do whatever they want, okay? They get away. And the only blessing is this, that when you have a bad judge, he will die.

That when you have a bad king, he will die. The problem, however, is when you have a good king, you don't want him to die, but he does. Okay?

So we all want bad leaders to die because we want them out the way, or we want them removed, but we want good leaders to last forever. The trouble is, they don't. And so the promise that God makes here is of a good and perfect king who will last forever.

The promise of Christmas is God fulfilling the promise of the good and perfect king who will last forever. God, all the way back in 2 Samuel 7, is telling us what our Christmas present is going to be. And our Christmas present is this, that God will provide for the world, not just the nation of Israel, a good and perfect king who will last forever because only then can you have a kingdom that lasts forever.

[26 : 41] Christians are even encouraged to pray, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Everything about Christmas is about the coming of the king and the coming of the kingdom that will last forever.

And you, in Christ, are kingdom people. So the promise God makes here is Jesus.

The gift that God has to give, what God will do for you, is Jesus. Now here's the point. Jesus Christ will either be the making of you or the breaking of you.

That Jesus Christ will either be the very thing on which your whole life is built or he'll be the very person of your downfall. Jesus Christ will either be the making or the breaking of you.

This is how Peter puts it. behold, I am laying inside a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious. And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

[27 : 53] Either he will be the making of you. So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense.

What Peter says about the gift of God is this, that God will give him into this world, the eternal king, giving us an eternal kingdom, producing an eternal people, but Jesus Christ will either be the making of you or the breaking of you.

You will either build your life on him or you will stumble over him. It's really that simple. And those who don't stumble, trust and love him.

Accept the gift of God with an open heart, receiving Christ. And those who fall all over him, those who are broken by him, stumble all over, are those who reject the very gift that God has to give.

So Christmas is all about this. The eternal king bringing an eternal kingdom, producing an eternal people that will last forever. And either that person will be the making of you or the breaking of you.

[29 : 10] It's that clear. And that's the point that's being made here. So let me say this as I close. Jesus, God the Father, and the kingdom has nothing to do with what you can do for him.

nothing. Nothing. God wants nothing from you. In fact, not many of us here this morning have the luxury of King David, a full bank account, you know, a big house.

No problem that we cannot take care of financially with the wealth that we have. No problems that God has given us rest from. And yet here's the interesting thing.

The thing that you should take great encouragement in is God isn't even interested in any of those things in the first place. God is not interested in the person who can do great for him.

Okay? He's interested in the person whom he can do great for. Okay? I want you to get that. God is not interested in the person who thinks that they can do great things for God.

[30 : 22] God is interested in the person who recognizes their need. For God to do great things for them. So you ought to take great encouragement from the words that God has to say to David.

A man who has everything. Okay? He goes to the cupboards and they're all full. Nothing is there.

Okay? Wherever he goes he can have whatever he wants and yet he can do nothing for God.

Nothing. Because God isn't about having things done for him. It's about recognizing what he will do for you. Jesus calls people who receive him poor in spirit.

That we recognize that though we have much, we don't have him and what we need is him. Blessed are those who are poor in spirit. Why? Because it's better to have God and nothing than to have everything and not have God.

In fact, I'll give you a little bit of mass. Okay? Biblical mass, plain and simple. Everything in the world, everything in the world minus God equals nothing.

[31 : 28] Okay? Everything in the world minus God equals nothing. But nothing plus God equals everything. Okay? Everything minus God equals nothing at the end of the day.

But nothing plus God equals everything. And so come and receive Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. We'll be right back.

In heaven and earth Shall pray for the enemies Of our children In worship You will be in the glory of God And your kingdom Shall come from the rain Away to the rain Blessing and honor Glory and power May the truth be to the Lord From the creation All our creation From the creation of the King In heaven and earth Shall pray for the enemies Of our children In worship You will be in the glory of God And your kingdom Shall come from the rain Away to the rain And your kingdom Shall pray over all the earth Sing through the ancient calling A blood shall compare to your righteous word Sing through the ancient calling Then your kingdom With everyone Sing through the ancient calling How could you ever possibly ing In worship Will be in the■ And your kingdom Shall come from the rain Away to the rain Away to the rain Away to the rain Away to the rain Away to the fire Away to the rain Father God, thank you for all that we have in Christ Jesus. And we ask for your blessing more than anything else. In Jesus' name, amen.