

Pastor Ben Libby

Sermon

1/9/2019

(Congregation may remain seated due to the length of the sermon reading)

In Christ Jesus, who would have us call upon Him for salvation, Fellow Redeemed:

The Word of the Lord which forms a portion for our sermon text this morning comes to us from Second Samuel, chapter 7, the first 16 verses:

2 Samuel 7:1-16 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, ² that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains." ³ Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you." ⁴ But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, ⁵ "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? ⁶ "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 tabernacle. ⁷ "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 Me a house of cedar?' " ' ⁸ "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. ⁹ "And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. ¹⁰ "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 anymore, as previously, ¹¹ "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. ¹² " When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. ¹⁵ "But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' "

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and from your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed...

What are your plans for the New Year? It is New Year's Day in a couple of days now. As we are on the doorstep of a completely new year, we as a

society like to make bold declarations for the upcoming year. "This will be the year when I finally lose those pesky 20 pounds!" or, "This will be the year

when I finally travel the country”, or even something as simple as “In this new year, I will read more books!” But ultimately, these resolutions are often destined to fail for one reason or another. It seems like no matter what your intentions are, [you might actually mean to follow through with them] it is very hard to keep a resolution going for 365 days.

But isn't that the way it always goes? Whether it is a New Year's resolution or just regular ordinary plans, we make plans and then life happens. New Year's resolutions are often very good ideas, but they are rarely followed through for the whole, entire year.

In our text today, we have an example of a “good plan” that did not end up happening. Sometimes we have plans and ideas that seem perfectly fine to us, but then it turns out that God has other ideas. Our “good plans” are nothing compared to God's GREAT PLAN. That plan and its ultimate completion are what this time of year is all about. It's not about what we want to get done in the next 365 days or so. It is about what God wants to complete for our whole entire race for all time! Jesus is the final piece of God's plan for you, and this plan is what is referenced in second Samuel. And so, we pray, **MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDIATIONS OF OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT, O LORD, OUR MAKER AND REDEEMER!**

Our plans are often times good in theory, as was the plan that was desired by King David here: **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,** ² **that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."** ³ **Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you."**

This was an unprecedented time for King David. Practically ever since he was anointed king

over Israel by Samuel as a young boy, he had been fighting. His name first became famous after he defeated the giant Goliath. This was the LORD's doing, and the LORD had much bigger plans than just David slaying the mighty champion. A lot of these plans included conquest and battle. David had to battle the enemies of Israel, and then he had to run from Israel itself, as King Saul grew jealous of his successor. David fought the Philistines, the Amorites, you name it. David had been fighting for a long time.

But here, God finally gave him rest from all of his many enemies. Now that David had a moment to do more than make war against armies, he had an idea in which he could throw himself into. He wanted to make the LORD a temple. Ever since the time when God led the people out of Egypt, the people had been worshipping God in the tabernacle. Basically, it was a tent. God's house had to be able to be mobile, because the people had been traveling in the wilderness, so the house of worship needed to be able to travel as well. But they had long been set up in the promised land. David looked around at his palace, and he saw a house made of cedar and gold. Why didn't God have such a permanent residence as well? It was in David's heart to give his Lord such a house of worship, and He consulted Nathan the prophet to see if this was a good idea or not. Nathan told the king, **"Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you."**

But God had different ideas. This was a good idea, and it was a plan that had the right motivation behind it. David knew that the LORD, the one who gave him his empire and everything else that he had, deserved better. Since this was the first time in which the nation enjoyed peace, David thought it would be a good time for this project to be started. This was a good plan, but it was not going to happen for King David.

2 Samuel 7:4-7 ⁴ **But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying,** ⁵ **"Go and tell My servant David,**

"Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? ⁶ "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 tabernacle. ⁷ "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 Me a house of cedar?' " "

While this plan was a good one, God tells David it is simply not in the cards for him. Certainly, God could have used David to construct a temple. Eventually, God would reveal to David that it would be for his son Solomon to do this thing that David had in his heart. God would use David to be a man of war, to clear the promised land of the many enemies of Israel. But God desired a king of peace to build His temple. Solomon's reign would be a peaceful one, and his ultimate achievement would be the construction of the temple. While David had a good plan in theory, it was part of God's Great plan that David's son would be the one to build such a temple.

Often, one of the first things I ask my wife when I get home from work is "Do we have any plans tonight?" I do not always remember if there is anything going on or not for that night, and she is much better at remembering these kinds of things. Do we need to go shopping tonight? Is there something else that was planned that I do not remember? I often forget plans that were made for my family.

What about you? Do you have any plans for tonight? What about for New Year's? New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are often a time for getting together and celebrating. Have you made any plans for it? What about the Year itself? Have you made any New Year's resolutions? Will this be the year when you accomplish a grand resolution?

Well, what if your New Year's resolution was "No sin in 2019!" That would certainly be a good resolution. To aim to not miss the mark once in all of 2019 is certainly a godly aspiration. But how long would you estimate that you would be able to follow through on that resolution? We as a people are so utterly corrupt that while this is a good desire, we realistically know we wouldn't last very long. Would you even last a few minutes into the new year free from sin? Maybe you could go the whole year without the "Big Sins..." But how long would you last before you gossiped, or lied, or did something dishonest? There are so many countless ways in which we fall short of God's Holy Law. We would not last even minutes into the New Year before we find our sinful hearts and minds to be in violation of that Law.

Just take the example of King David. After this account, David goes back to war and defeats several more enemies. Eventually, he tires of war and remains in Jerusalem while his armies were still fighting. This is when David saw the woman Bathsheba, and then his sin of lust led to the sin of deceit and then murder. It does not take long for our good-natured plans to be turned into plans of the sinful heart. David enjoyed peace, but then that peace ultimately led him to a sinful plan, which grew into more and more sin.

And that is why God's plans are always better than ours! Why would God turn down such a good intended request? David meant well here and yet God still told him no. Maybe it was as simple as God had other plans for David. David wasn't done fighting, and right this he goes back to it. Maybe even though it seemed like an ideal time to build the temple, in reality, it wasn't. Maybe it is as simple as God wanted this for Solomon, David's Son who wasn't even born yet. The ultimate answer is we don't know. **Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**

Initially, the prophet Nathan gave David the go ahead. He could see that the king meant well. But that night God told Nathan to tell David his answer. It was one of "Have I ever asked this of you?" David would listen to what God had to say.

This is one of the greatest qualities that David had. As was pointed out, David was sinful just like us and made some very sinful decisions. Yet, David almost never did anything without first consulting God. Before he went into battle, he would first consult God to see if He would give him the victory. David was a very smart man; the Lord had given him a great deal of wisdom. But the wisest quality of David was that he repeatedly did not rely on his own wisdom. Instead, he would first go before the LORD, and that was largely how he made his decisions.

This is a great lesson for us to learn. When we make decisions, whether they are major or minor, we should always first consult the LORD. We need to make sure we pray to God and see if He wants the same thing that we do. If it is, then you will have it! As Paul said, **Romans 8:31 If God is for us, who can be against us?**

Now, we don't have prophets among us like David did who can tell us a direct answer to us. But you can be sure that God will answer your prayers! It may not always be in the way or even in the time frame that you are looking for, but God will answer your prayers! ^{ESV} **Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.**

The fact is, God wants us to ask! That's one of the things that I am trying to teach my son. He wants many different things. Most of the time what he wants is reasonable and many times we give him what he wants. But it's important to learn HOW to ask for things. It's important to say please and thank you, instead of just demanded something or saying "gimme". Our Heavenly Father wants the same for

us. He wants to give us what is good for us. But He wants us to ask first! No matter what, His will is done. The manner in which we ask for what we want is important! **Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;**

And what was God's answer to David's plan and prayer? His answer was indeed "NO", but He came back with another answer as well...**2 Samuel 7:16 "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' ' "**

David wanted to build God a house. God's answer was "No, instead I AM going to build a house for you!" God would set up a kingdom for David that was greater than that of the previous King. David's descendants would rule Israel for as long as they had a kingdom to rule. Saul was a bad king, and as a result, God took the kingdom away from his descendants. But David's heirs would rule in perpetuity. Of course, some of those Kings did not rule in the same godly manner that David did. But the kingdom would remain in David's descendants. The house that God was planning to build for David would last forever.

Yet, David's earthly kingdom did not last forever. You know about the history of Israel. The Kingdom would become divided, and eventually, the people would be exiled into foreign countries. But, when God says that He would establish David's throne forever, He was not talking about an earthly throne. Jesus would be the final piece of the plan, He would be great David's greater Son, He would be True Son of David, born in Bethlehem, the city of David. Jesus was the fulfillment of when God said here. Jesus would rule forever, just like Isaiah said **Isaiah 9:7 ⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the**

LORD of hosts will perform this. This promised plan that the LORD gave King David would not just be a blessing to David and Israel, but Jesus would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth!

David had a good plan to build the LORD a house. God had an even greater plan in mind. He would bless mankind with a Savior who would come from the line of David. His name would be Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins! We have good plans and ideas all the time, but they don't always work out. God's plans always work out! At the moment, we think that our plan is the way things should go. But God's plan is always greater than our best plans. **Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.**

God's plan is always superior to ours because it has His people's best interest at the heart of it!

So, what about now? What plans do you have for New Year's? What plans do you have for 2019? What are your long-term plans? New Years is a time for plan making and goal setting. It is a good thing to have a plan and make decisions. But it is important to know where to go with these plans and goals first. We need things. But what we really need is to ask God for these things which we think we need. If what you want for yourself is not what God wants for you, then He will answer you like He did David here. But God's answer is never just NO. There is always something greater meant for you! God answers, "That thing you want is not going to happen, but I will give you something greater instead! MY GRACE!!!"

The answer that Nathan the prophet gave David that day is the same answer that God gives us here today. **2 Samuel 7:3 "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."** David was not going to be able to build His LORD the temple that he wanted to. But that didn't change the fact that the LORD was still with him!!! And God is with us as well! And what could be a greater gift? When

the answer comes to you "The LORD is with You!", what greater confidence could you have?

How do you know that God is with you? JESUS. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy to David, and He is the ultimate answer to all of our plans and prayers! He was born, the Son of David, who took away our sin and restored us as children of the Heavenly Father. Jesus always had the same resolution every New Year. That year, He would resolve to be perfect. He would keep that perfection all throughout His life, and He would die to give us His perfection. He would fulfill God's plan of your salvation, and now we have heaven waiting for us.

Whatever your plan is, even if it is godly and prayerfully approached, it doesn't guarantee that it will happen. We will make plans for the upcoming year. They may or may not happen. It's good to have a plan. But it's even better to have a Savior who has secured your long-term plan of eternal life. If God is for us, who can be against us? If God is the one building your house, then it will come to completion. God's grace is more than a silver lining, it is the best plan, the best possible outcome ever! Go, God is with you. How can we be sure? Because Jesus is with us. What a blessed reminder that no matter what our plans may be, our Jesus our Immanuel is GOD WITH US! Amen!