

## God's Covenant Story Continued through David

*Series: What Is the Gospel?*

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Good morning. My name is PD Mayfield and I am the Associate Pastor here at CPC. And it is good to be with you this morning. It is good to say in my heart, "It is well with my soul." Praise be to God.

If you have your Bible or your tablet or your i Pad or your phone or your Google Glass or whatever...your memory...please turn with me to 2 Samuel 7.

What do you get when your country is facing numerous threats from the outside, outside its borders, and intense polarization among its people within its borders? What do you get when your generation deals with the failures of past leadership and hopes for the success of future leadership? Some may call that the daily news or others might call that the 2016 presidential election. But what I'm talking about is 2 Samuel 7. I don't know what you're talking about, but I'm talking about 2 Samuel 7.

So turn with me and let's read God's word, hearing this story of the Gospel. Even as we continue this series, *"What Is the Gospel?"* we are working off the premise that the Gospel begins at the beginning and it traces through the whole story. And we're looking at how this Gospel story of Jesus really is a story of God's covenant relationship with his people. And it begins first with creation, then Noah, then Abraham, then Moses, and now as we look at the covenant with David. The text starts at verse 4, but I'm going to begin reading it at verse 1. Hear God's word.

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, <sup>2</sup>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." <sup>3</sup>And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you."

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, <sup>5</sup>"Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in?' <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>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?"' <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup>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, <sup>11</sup>from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all

your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.<sup>14</sup> 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,<sup>15</sup> but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.<sup>16</sup> And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”<sup>17</sup> In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

This is the word of the Lord. [Thanks be to God.] Will you pray with me. Father, we do indeed give you thanks and praise for your word. That we can come to knowledge of you, that we can come to a saving faith in Christ by your word. That we can read of how you have worked from the beginning, how you have revealed yourself, how you have made covenants with your people, how you have brought about deliverance and rescue and salvation. We pray that your Spirit would even teach us now, that we would come to greater appreciation for your Gospel story in the story of David. That we would look back remembering your faithfulness then and holding fast to your faithfulness now. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.

So for the past year my family and I, we've been renting, and this past Thursday we closed on a town home. And we're really excited about that. It's the first home we've ever purchased, ever owned. And of course there's nothing...in of itself there's nothing special about buying or owning a home, but symbolically for me it actually holds a great deal of weight. For me it cultivates a sense of permanence. You see, I've moved a lot in my life--from Oklahoma to South Carolina. I went to my undergrad school in North Carolina. I went to graduate school in Missouri. I lived in Virginia for two years, and now I'm here. And so a sense of permanence goes a long way for me—going from renting and just throwing money, so to speak, out the window, month after month, year after year, to actually now buying a home—and maybe you might even say throwing money out the window month after month, year after year. It gives me a sense of being rooted in this place.

And it makes me wonder how David felt. You see, he went from being a shepherd to be anointed a king. But that wasn't always a great, you know, easy, smooth transition. You see, first he was a king on the run. Then he was king over Judah, which was just the southern part; it was one tribe of the twelve. He was king over Judah for seven years, and then he became king over a united Israel for a lot longer. He experienced many successes. He defeated Israel's enemies. He brought the capital from Hebron, which was in the south, to Jerusalem, to be more of a unified, centralized capital to the nation. And now in his reign as king, Israel is benefiting from relative peace and prosperity. It was time for him to go from being a warrior king, fighting enemies, to an administrative king, building a better future for Israel.

And just like Israel then, just like any nation now, we long for good leadership. We desire it; we hope for it. But just as we hope in a leader who will embody everything we long for and do everything we need, sometimes we are given over to despair how leaders fail. Or we worry whether the next leader will do any better than the last. It's easy to become preoccupied by all

that is wrong in the world. And it's easy to become afraid of all the challenges that are before us. So it's very natural, it's very easy, to desire a leader with strength, who can provide stability and prosperity. But in that process of wanting that, of being about processes to make it even happen, we sometimes give our leaders what is actually meant for the Lord. And other times we actually dishonor our leaders, thinking we are giving to the Lord.

In this series of *"What Is the Gospel?"* we certainly recognize how that is perfectly fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus. But where does that come from? And we've gone through this series of tracing the Gospel lines throughout all of Scripture, and we come to David. And we see how the covenant made with David is extremely important to the nation of Israel. And it's equally important for the story of God's redemption in Jesus, because one of the central points of Christianity, the point of the Gospel—it rests in the claim that Jesus' role is King in the line of David. That is, from every one of the gospels that is imbedded explicitly. It's mentioned, not as explicitly, but it's always in the water of recognizing that Jesus is—as many of the gospel writers would even give him the title, Son of David. For him to be King, for him to be Christ, to be the Messiah, is to be a son of David.

So this morning we're going to look at two big categories which are printed in your bulletin. We're going to look at how this covenant with David has echoes from the past, but it also pivots and has promises for the future. And then we're going to discuss a few implications of this passage.

So first, looking at the echoes of the past. So what makes this a covenant? If you notice the word covenant doesn't actually appear in this passage. And so we get it from these themes, these elements, this common language that represented the covenantal relationship. And likewise there's other places where it's specifically discussed as a covenant. We see the Psalms: Psalm 89, Psalm 132, discuss it being a covenant made with David, his throne being established forever. Last week John spoke about Exodus 19, looking at the covenant made through Moses. And here the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob go from being a ragtag group of newly freed slaves to a fully constituted nation under the gracious and sovereign care of the Lord, the true and living God who makes himself known. He reveals himself, you see, for the Israelites. They had heard stories of this God, this God who was a creator, someone sovereign over all things, more powerful than the gods of Egypt. They heard stories of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. And here they are, with Moses leading them out of Egypt, and they are experiencing the Lord's salvation. Not only are they just hearing these stories and knowing something about God from the distance of this oral tradition or these rumors you've heard of, kind of murmurs, of this God who enters into a story, enters into history and acts—they themselves are experiencing his action, his power, his redemption. And it's in the context of his salvation, knowing him as redeemer, that we see that that's the covenantal relationship: for the Lord to be their God, and for them to be his people.

And this story continues. Moses died. The Israelites began to live out what it meant to be in this covenant relationship in the land that was promised to Abraham. But that didn't go smoothly. It was during this time that they would occasionally be ruled by a judge appointed by God. This judge ruled for usually short durations in order to deliver Israel from the hand of their enemies, from oppression. And it was also to call back, to invite, the people of Israel to return to following the God who made this covenant. Samuel was the last judge. Now he was a bit

different. As his responsibilities developed, the longer he served as judge, there we see this kind of blossoming into more duties that take on more a prophetic role. We also notice that he rules for a much longer period of time. So Samuel is this transitional period from the judges to king over Israel. And despite Samuel's warning to the people of what would come when you want a king, when a king rules over you, the Lord gave Saul as Israel's first king. But you may know how that story goes. Saul later failed and he was removed and David was put in his place.

And so we're here at this passage in 2 Samuel, and we see this sense of peace from the enemies, this sense of rest. If you notice, David went from being on the run and camping in the wilderness and hiding out in caves to—we see how he's living now in a house of cedar, the sense of stability and luxury status that comes with the wood, the materials of cedar. And he's looking around and he's noticing, *Hey, my surroundings have changed. I guess I need to upgrade God's place.* And so he has this desire to build a house for God, recognizing that God used to live in a tent, and now he wants to build a house for God to dwell in. So we see David's desire, but very quickly we see that there is an interjection; God has something to say, something to inform David, to shape his desires, to show him what he has his intentions for.

So where we come in this chapter, the significance of this passage in the scope of God's redemptive history, we see how God has given rest from David's enemies. We see this momentary picture of Israel actually functioning as the way they were supposed to be functioning, as a people who were experiencing the flourishing and the peace—what the Bible often calls *shalom*. And they were functioning as Israel, as a living body, showing themselves, reflecting God's glory, being a witness to the nations of who they are in relationship to this Redeemer God who has made promises and has kept his faithfulness, and has again and again and again proved himself trustworthy.

But we see how the Lord intends to build a house for David. Here in the in the passage there is actually a play on the words. David's thinking about a house like a temple, but God says 'a house' meaning a dynasty. He's going to build something in David's lineage. And the Lord's reasons are consistent with his past covenants, as we've seen him transition from this broad scoping interaction with all of creation—with Adam and Eve and Noah—and now then to Abraham, he's working with a particular person. And how history is moving forward, and then God begins working with a particular people. We see that last time from Exodus 19, and we see that now, even more so, under David's kingship. It's not David's wishes and plans that make a place for the Lord. Actually, it's the Lord who plans a place for his people. And he makes covenant with them and provides the way of relating to him through a covenant representative. And that's what the king functions as; he is the representative of the covenant between God and the people. But he's not above the people; he's not above the law. He's under God's reign, God's rule, in the kingdom. He makes a covenant with him and provides the way of relating to him. David and his sons are a mediator—the way in which the people relate to God.

And so we see this language, these echoes. We see the Lord initiating this covenant. We notice the Lord's activity. We see how there are the themes that are repeated over and over again. Just start with me in verse 9, and I'm going to just quickly run through them. When you hear these words, both to the readers of 2 Samuel, the first audience, and then even to our ears today, we need to be hearing where these echoes are coming from, because they play out from the very beginning as we're tracing through these things. God says: I have been with you; I will

make for you a great name; I will appoint a place for my people; I will plant them so they will dwell in their own place; I will give you rest; I will make you a house; I will raise up your offspring. And so we see these common things of the covenant, of God's promises. We see a people in relationship with him. We see a sense of God purposing it, making it come to fruition. We see a land. We see offspring. We see this promise that even hearkens back to Genesis. That promise of the offspring is still here. It's unfolding. We have never left that sense of how is God going to fix this problem—this rebellion that we have against God and this conflict that we experience with each other. We go from eating fruit to killing each other to hiding in the bushes to wanting to be hidden from God.

So we see here in David's time these echoes are beautiful reminders. Not only are they the reminders of the past, but they are real experiences that David and the people of Israel are experiencing. They're experiencing partial fulfillment of the covenant promises that were made to Abraham. And in David's time Israel was experiencing partial fulfillment of the covenant relationship made through Moses. You see, Israel is a people with a purpose. They are to worship the Lord, and they're to reflect his glory in their kingdom. They are to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. You see, the God who created all and redeems all, the God who was tenting, who was tabernacling, who was residing in this tent, this makeshift nomadic, pop tent. He is with his people. He doesn't need a house made by human hands; he dwells with his people. That's the trajectory of scripture of God dwelling with his people. We're going to see that traced out.

As we go from echoes, we also recognize well, what are the promises for the future. These echoes of the past bring to mind the Lord's character: that he's gracious, he's steadfast, he's, loving, he's faithful. To be a member of that covenant community is to acknowledge who he is. It's to receive his salvation. It's to praise him with gratitude. It's embracing the covenant from the heart. Not only are you just a member of the covenant by birth, but what does it look like for you to embrace that truly for yourself. It's not just merely external religious practices, as if you're just going through the motions and then you're good to go. Embracing the covenant from the heart is to live in a way that truly reflects this covenant relationship. It involves worship of God, and it involves benefiting your neighbor. We see his promise is established through the Lord's redemptive purposes through Israel. Now the function and purpose of Israel continues. They are to be a light. They are to be in a sense missionaries to the world of God's character and God's deliverance. And so there was a role for Israel.

And not only that, but then there was a role for the king. And here in this time in the history of Israel we see the further developing of three offices in the life of Israel. Some of them we've already seen: the priest. This religious office goes back to Aaron, who was Moses' brother, back in Exodus 40. The priests led in worship. They instructed the people. They made sacrifices before the Lord on behalf of the people in order to affect forgiveness of sin and cleansing of unrighteousness.

We see—even with Moses as a prophet—but we see this kind of development of the role of the prophet. Here we see the interaction that David is having with Nathan. Prophets were a distinct religious office, and they retained the right to censure the king. (I lost my place. I guess most kings would like prophets to lose their place, so they're not told what to do.) The prophet is not his own, but rather the messenger of the Lord and the Lord's messages for the people as it

pertained to the covenant. And so the prophet needed to be distinct from the king. He didn't need to be ruled or coerced by the king. And we see all sorts of problems that play out in Israel when that gets all muddled.

And the distinct role of king. We see from this passage that God will lead Israel and rule Israel through the king. The king functions as the covenant mediator, the national head, and he represents the people. And here, you know, if we were to trace these lines out past this time with David, this is one theme of Scripture: as the king goes, so does the nation. And that plays out time and time again in the nation of Israel. And that is what's so powerful. As we pivot we are beginning to see the longing of a true David, someone that will fulfill the office of king as it was intended to be—this right relationship with God, this right relationship with each other in a community...longing for that—for the king to rule justly with righteousness and with equity and with justice. These things are not unique to democracies. They're unique to humans. We long for justice. We long for righteousness. We long for good leaders.

So what are the implications? For the world, we see the Lord's salvation welcomes people into a house, and his house is set up through David. The covenant made with David and his descendants is the culmination of God's covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants. We see a continuation of what God is doing. Salvation is indeed through the house of Israel. But we see when Jesus is on the scene there is something that's the same, and there is something that is unique. You see, David is not like Jesus. We don't read these stories in the Old Testament and look for Jesus. We read the New Testament and we see how Jesus was the embodiment of what those leaders were supposed to be. David is not Jesus. Jesus is like David—a more perfect, a more complete, a fulfilled David. This shapes our hope. This shapes our sense of corporate identity, how we as the House of God—those who are seeing themselves in this story—how this is something that we corporately embody as a witness, bearing witness to him. That we would desire for God's reign not only in our own lives, but in other people's lives. And our hope is shaped by this story. I mean, I think very often of the man in the Gospel accounts who is blind and he just hears that Jesus is walking by and he gets it right. What does he cry out and say? “Son of David, have mercy!” Though blind, he clearly saw the connection between Jesus and being a son of David. We are to embody corporately as the church the message of the Gospel with a loving prophetic witness, in the name of Christ, not enshrining culture through political power in the name of some version of civil religion.

The implications for us individually, of course, is asking the question: If this is the story God is telling, where are you in this story? Do you see your place in the story? Do you hear the invitation to come be a part of this? Do you recognize Jesus' kingship, recognizing that he is the son of David? Do you see your place in the story?

And this is where—it's not a direct application from this passage, but it's an interesting line of thinking—but this idea of David's desire to build a house that got re-framed with the Lord's plans for him. You see, it's easy to get distracted with our own desires and our own plans. And they're often for God, what we think God is doing. But we are to focus our attention on God's plans for the world. It's knowing the story. It's immersing ourselves in the story that has been told and that is being told even now. It's seeing God's work in the world, and that includes you. That includes me. It's not about me, but it includes me.

Now that we own our own house, you know, we are busy with decluttering, sorting, wondering why we ever bought that thing, why do we need that thing. We're all in that process. But we're also in this process of preparing the home that we've bought. We are cleaning the carpets, we are doing some painting, we've got some plumbing work to do. (I'm not doing it. I wish I could do it.) But the sense of preparation. But in owning a home, Kelly and I are taking on the legal obligations that come with home ownership. We also take on the responsibilities of what it means to steward the house and the home as something we do possess, but that we're stewarding it—stewarding it to be a reflection of God's presence in our lives as we raise our family, as we welcome guests, as we live among our neighbors. And I pray, I do—I do pray that God is glorified in how we use the house. But he is not limited to a house made by human hands. And with all the good, there is also the potential for the unpleasant. With all the wonderful things we hope for, there may be things that come our way that are not so wonderful. Our home could be broken into. It could catch fire. Our family will probably at times enjoy wonderful meals around the table, and then we probably will enjoy not so wonderful meals around the table. Where there are joys and where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Gospel does not imply that I have to get my house in order for it to be a sacred space for the Lord. No, the Gospel is God dwelling in and through Jesus. That's one way to look at the Gospel. Now that reality of the Gospel, that's what brings in the forgiveness of sins, the washing away of all of our guilt, the comfort and the encouragement to all of the shame that we may experience. The Gospel is God dwelling with his people. And it's the good news of Jesus, that He is the final David who rules with justice and righteousness and mercy. In the covenant of David we see partial fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham. The story of God's covenant to his people—it marches through time. We can go through the prophets and see how it went from a unified kingdom to a fractured kingdom. We see how they disobey the Lord and there is judgment and there is exile away from the land. But the experience of dwelling in the Lord's presence remains true. And when they do return to the land there is this renewed sense of hope, that seed of that offspring. Maybe this next king is the Messiah we hope for. Maybe this next king is going to be the one that actually brings about God's kingdom. Shalom flourishing. Maybe. But probably not.

And so this relationship of a covenant with God under the king—yes, we have the story of Israel of many, many kings doing really stupid things and other kings doing outright rebellious, wicked things. And so goes the king; so goes the nation. But all along, God is gracious, God is faithful, God is kind, God is with his people. He never leaves them nor forsakes them. And so when we get to Jesus—and that is the beautiful thing that we're even going to be celebrating at the table—we see this wonderful kind of differentiation of the three offices in the people of Israel, and in Christ we see this beautiful weaving of them together where Jesus is the perfect priest on our behalf, where he is the perfect prophet who speaks truth about who God is and his message to the world, and he is the perfect king who has all of the glory of the Davidic throne, the nation of Israel. But it's never meant just for them. The particularity of the nation of Israel includes the Gentiles. And it takes a perfect priest and a perfect prophet and a perfect king to bring back all of God's creation, the renewal of all things. The fracturing of humanity, the very reason why we are in rebellion against God, the very reason why we experience hurt, the very reason why we are wicked and sinful and frustrated and angry and sad—all of these things are made right in Christ. And at the table is this picture of what Christ did on our behalf.

And so as my wife put down a down payment, and as we are going to be putting down a lot of payments, we're paying back a mortgage. But in the Gospel there is no down payment. There is no mortgage to pay. It's been paid for you. Christ is the down payment. Christ is the finishing of the mortgage. He cancels the debt, restores our relationship with the Lord. And it reorients how we function in this world now; it reorients how we relate to each other as a family in God; but it certainly impacts how we are reoriented to how we see those who are not yet believers in Christ. Because we see each other and we see other people who are not believers in Christ—we see them more and more as God sees them: in his love, in his grace, in his mercy. And that in his kindness he provides a way.

And that gets into other things, beautiful things of the Gospels—all of the different ways we can express who Jesus is and what he has done for us. And we do that at the table. He invites us to come eat with him. He invites us to be with him, because we come to find out in the Gospel that he is already here dwelling with us. That is what we learn even from 2 Samuel 7 seven—that Christ is the fulfillment of these things and God remains dwelling with us.

Let us pray. Father, we give you thanks and praise for your word, for your salvation, and likewise we even now praise your name for how you feed us by your Spirit in your supper. Lord, prepare our hearts. May we receive by faith what you offer abundantly in your Son, Jesus. We praise his name and give thanks to him. In Jesus' name. Amen.