



Speaker:
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David's Ladder

12/26/2022 (MON) | Bible: 2 Samuel 7:18-29

We're looking at someone else's prayer today. I propose we let this prayer remind us about God. What he's like. The things he does. And, particularly, what it tells us about the type of God we come to.

The background to this prayer is that David had decided God needed somewhere better to live than a marquee! He wanted to build God a "proper" house. And he decided he was the man for the job.

Through the prophet Nathan, God instructs David he **won't** be building a new temple or anything else. But he does make some gracious promises to David. And this act of kindness by God moves David to pray.

This was a fairly simple prayer. But there's plenty in it for the Bible student to think about. The approach I've decided on is to draw out something from each verse. One thing, from each verse, *about God*.

That makes it a twelve-point sermon. Make yourselves comfortable!

Well although this might seem like an arbitrary way to tackle the passage, I've endeavoured to present a progression of thought—hence the title, *David's Ladder*. I hope to be able to take you with me through that progression.

v18: Firstly, we see here a God who DISPENSES GOOD THINGS to us. "Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"

Who am I, David asks, *that you should have done all this for me?* He's acknowledging God has done things for him. Quite remarkable things. If you were to read the section before this, you'd see God himself rehearsing some of the wonderful things he'd done for David:

- God had taken him from a lowly position in life and made him king over Israel itself
- He'd been with David constantly, wherever he went
- He'd cleared out David's enemies from the land
- And he promised to give David a great reputation.

All the days we lived before our conversion, God was carefully managing our lives. And even then, he gave us good things. Then he gave us that **great** gift of repentance and faith. And since then, we've received good things from him *daily*.

Of the things God gives, there are those we remain blind to and those we see. If we were more on God's wavelength, we'd be able to see ALL his mercies to us. And of those we *are* aware of and sometimes even thank God for, how quickly we forget them!

If we could better see God's hand in our lives; and if we treasured all the memories of his giving, could each of us not write a book? Several books?

v19: We see here a God who gives those things GENEROUSLY. "And this was yet a **small thing** in thy sight, O Lord GOD..."

David had taken stock of just how many blessings God had given him up to that point in his life. Now, he realises doing all that was a *small thing* for God. The Lord is so powerful that it wasn't difficult. He asks the prophet Jeremiah the rhetorical question, "Is there anything too hard for me?"

But David wasn't only acknowledging what God had done for him was easy. David was implying that God must therefore have the capacity to do so much more. He was able to GIVE so much more!

When God gives good things to us, his supplies of mercies are not reduced. No matter how generously he gives, there's never a risk his warehouse of blessings will run low.

He's able to give, and give, and give, without end. And this is exactly what he *will* do in the world to come! All those who belong to him; all those who put their faith in his Christ; will be raised to a life characterised by the endless giving of God.

v20: We see here a God who gives APPROPRIATELY, because he knows us. "And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant."

He knows our needs. He provides for us *materially, knowing* all we need to live in this world. He also provides for us *spiritually, knowing* all we need to *serve* him in this world.

David knew this. But he goes further. He confesses in this verse God knew **him**. Not just his needs; God knew **David**—inside out.

Do you remember when God chose David from among his brothers? Samuel the priest had been sent to the family of Jesse the Bethlehemite to find the man who'd become king. Jesse presented his sons to Samuel. The first one was introduced. And Samuel saw this impressive looking guy and said, *This is definitely the one!* He was impressed by this young man's appearance. Perhaps he reminded Samuel of Saul, who was tall and handsome.

But then the Lord spoke to Samuel and said, “Man looks on the outward appearance, *but the Lord looks on the heart.*” He sees men how they really are.

We too make judgements about people based on the things we see. Their faces, their clothes, their speech. People conducting job interviews do it. People in coffee shops do it. And even the Lord’s people do it.

But our assessments can never be complete. Not so with God. “The LORD seeth not as man seeth,” it says. The Lord sees all that we see, but he can also *hear what they’re thinking*. He can *read their motives* as easily as if it were printed in a book. So it is he knows us perfectly.

God knowing us, then, means a lot more than merely knowing what we need from him. It means he reads us at all times—and that includes when we worship him.

As we worship him today, friends, he knows us. And if we’re aware of this piercing vision God has, it should provoke us to refocus our hearts and minds towards godly worship.

In all the ways we worship God, our hearts need to be right. Worship must be done out of a genuine desire to give him the glory due to him, and it must be done in love.

v21: We see here a God who also gives HEARTILY. “For thy word’s sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things.”

Our God is not an impersonal force. When he did good for David, it wasn’t done without feeling. God *delighted* to do good for his servant! He did it with true, big-hearted love.

If you’ve ever taken an interest in theology, and maybe read some books, you may be aware there have long been debates about the nature of God. And some have proposed God is so much higher than us, we cannot think of him having emotions that we do. They argue God is unchanging, not lurching from one emotion to the other.

God certainly is higher than us. He is transcendent. And this means much about God is beyond our comprehension. This, I believe, is one of those matters. I don’t know fully what it means for God to love and hate. He’s on a different level than us.

I do know this. **In his wisdom, he has chosen to describe himself as a God who experiences emotions.** I’m convinced he *does* experience these things, but on a level we can’t imagine. The bottom line is we can confidently embrace the reality of God’s love towards us.

So when God does things for *us*, it’s done lovingly. He does it with his whole heart! It’s quite humbling to think that giving to an ungrateful and wretched bunch like us could possibly make God happy.

v22: We see here the God who gives so lovingly has no equal. “Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee.”

This God—our God—is unique. There are things which are called gods, but they’re not gods at all.

In Isaiah God says, *Besides me, is there any other real God? I don’t know of any.* His point is that he knows everything, and he knows of course there is no other God. Not really. David knew this, which is why he was praying to God and not a stupid idol.

It’s quite amusing how the New Age types talk about their god, Mother Nature. They talk about “her” as wise, powerful and of great creative ability. They speak of her similarly to how we speak about God. Clearly, they’re trying to describe the works of God while persuading themselves there IS no God.

They also talk about the *gifts* we receive from “Mother Nature”. Yet we who see the authority of the word of God understand there is but one God, and every good gift and every perfect gift we receive comes from him.

We quite rightly thank people for good they do to us. But we maintain the belief that the real source was God.

In the previous chapter in Isaiah, God says no other God was formed before him and neither will there be in the future. He says, “I am the Lord, and besides me there is no saviour.”

So in the matter of the greatest gift of all, we again confess that it’s found only in the God of the Bible. God is the saviour, and to look elsewhere for salvation is a pointless and dangerous exercise.

v23: We see here this one true God DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE. “...what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom **God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee** from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?”

I’m sure you’ll recall how the Lord often reminds the Hebrews how he delivered them from Egypt with a mighty hand. David here is, if you like, “reminding” God of that great deliverance as a way to praise him.

One of the reasons God sends trouble into the lives of his people, the ones he loves, is to then rescue them. God brought about the enslavement of the Hebrews so that, in delivering them, he could display his love to his people and his power to everyone.

And in those dramatic events, we can see something of how God works in us, those who belong to Christ. He dragged *them* out of Egypt, and he drags *us* out of our sinful lives. He gradually drove out *their enemies* from the promised land, and he gradually drives *sin* from our hearts.

v24: We see here a God who ESTABLISHES the people who he delivers. “For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever; and thou, LORD, art become their God.”

God didn't only *deliver* the Hebrews. He *established* them. He made himself their God, cementing the connection through promises.

As long as the Hebrews remained faithful to God, he'd make *them* secure in the promised land. They'd not only have a wonderful place to live, but God would also keep them safe from their enemies. And for as long as they obeyed him, God kept them planted firmly in the land.

It didn't last long. Rebellion led to God's rebuke, but their refusal to listen to these rebukes through the mouths of the prophets would eventually lead to God raising up armies of men to do his bidding and invade the promised land. On a number of occasions, foreign forces came into the land and took people away as captives.

Some of them returned to their land and regrouped and rebuilt. But it was doomed to fail. When the word became flesh, he was confronted with a religious edifice full of hypocrisy and wickedness. And not only did he tell them about a new kingdom he came to set up, but he warned it would involve the overturning of their whole world including the complete destruction of that place which was the centre of their universe: the temple.

The much-celebrated creation of the modern state of Israel was a damp squib in terms of fulfilment of Bible prophecy. The country is full of godless people. Its leaders are godless people. Generations of Jews have died, and continue to die, in their sins, with no second chances, and which part of the world they lived during their lives has no relevance.

v25: We see here a God who establishes US. “O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever...”

David knew God not only dealt with the nation as a whole. God's care was directed to smaller units too. Tribes. Families. Individuals.

But I just said national Israel was finished. God would never again show special favour to one nation. If they were to build a brand-new temple and a replica of the Ark of the covenant, God wouldn't visit it. They could kill animals in sacrifice, but God would never accept them.

If your trust is in Jesus:

- You belong to the TRUE Israel of God
- You are the children of PROMISE
- You are the REAL children of Abraham

- You have had your HEARTS circumcised—that is, a great work in your heart has been performed by the Holy Spirit.
- And within the gospel which you believed is found the greatest fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

And he'll keep you secured—established—in his kingdom. You're in the kingdom now, and you will be kept in it forever.

And just as God dealt with Israel as a whole and the people individually, so it is with his worldwide, spiritual Israel. He deals with the worldwide congregation of Jesus as a whole, certainly. Jesus, it's said, gave himself for the church. He died for **it**.

But he also cares for his congregations. He cares for this congregation. If you belong to Christ, God cares for you. And he's established you forever in his kingdom.

v26: We see here a God who also RULES SOVEREIGNLY OVER US. “The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel”

He was their God. He ruled over them in love and justice.

It was an encouragement to King David to know this. It wasn't enough to know a God who could deliver the people from their trouble. It wasn't even enough to know God had planted them securely in the land. David wanted God to rule over them!

Normally, kings want to rule completely. When Jesus came into this world, King Herod was troubled. A noble king would be GLAD if a greater king came along who could rule the people in a better way. But are any of them like that?

Well, Herod preferred to commit an act of mass murder against all young children in the region just to prevent any competition arising. People love to have power and will often do **anything** to hang onto it.

Now David was a far better king than Herod. Despite committing some terrible sins, on the whole there was something about him which reflected the character of God more than any other king.

He was the king. Yet he was happy to know even *his* rule was lower than God's. He understood his place. He ruled the kingdom, but he gladly accepted his accountability before God, the King of the whole world.

Is it not a great comfort to you, friends, to know God actively governs this world and that all his purposes will come to pass?

v27: We see here a God who, as our God, MAKES GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES TO US. “...thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, **I will build thee a house**”

The promise to David was specific to him. God promised to continue his family line. But think on the greater promises God makes to you! Here's a few from Jesus himself to make the point:

- "I **will** give you rest"
- "I **will** make you fishers of men"
- "I **will** build my church"
- "I **will** not leave you comfortless"
- "I **will** pray to the father for you"
- "I **will** see you again"

Our God does not rule as a despot. He's a king who has more care for his subjects than an earthly king ever could. And one of the ways he shows this care is through making these outrageously big promises!

In this prayer, David was in effect asking God to do something God had already said he'd do! David didn't always know the right thing to pray for, but here he had no doubt. Because God had made the promise, David was fully confident in asking God to fulfil it.

Do you have difficulty knowing what to ask of God? Here's the answer. Find in God's word promises which apply to you. For example, God promises to increase the Holy Spirit's influence on your life if you ask him. So you can ask for the Spirit with absolute confidence and know he'll answer you.

v28: We see here a God who makes these promises IN ALL TRUTHFULNESS. "O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true"

His words are true, David says. Again, what use is a God who makes those great and precious promises if we didn't know he was a God of all truth?

The Bible assures us God cannot lie. Note, it's not that he has the power to lie but always chooses not to. We say he cannot lie because it would contradict his own nature. Only a fool would use this as evidence that God is not omnipotent. We know his inability to lie glorifies him and is evidence of his infinite goodness!

David had previously said his confidence in prayer was based on this. His hope for an answered prayer was not only because a promise had been made by God but that he also knew God could not lie.

Brethren: we hold in our hands the greatest expression of God's truth: the Bible. Do you desire to hear God's truth? Read his word. Listen to him through the preachers OF his word.

I know people who claim to have received special messages directly from God. In as polite a way as I'm able, I convey to those people I believe they're deluded. If you meet a Christian

who tells you they've just met Jesus in the supermarket and received a message from him, promise me you'll ignore them.

God would have us be Bible **believers**, Bible **hearers** and Bible **students**.

v29: Finally, we see here a God who is FAITHFUL. "...let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for **thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it**"

This is the logical conclusion of what we just said. God makes promises. Because of his absolute truthfulness, his promises cannot be faulty. They must come to pass. He will do as he promised. And that is his faithfulness.

We serve a God who can be trusted to do what he said. The same cannot be said for any sinful person. Even someone who you think is completely trustworthy *isn't*. But God...!

If you trust in him, he promises to never again bring to mind your sins—and he won't! He promises to never leave you—and he won't! And he promises to not leave you in the grave—and he won't! He'll raise you from the dead and usher you into an everlasting paradise.

Let me finish by summarising what we've discovered today. When we approach God:

- We know him to be the one from whom all good things come
- He gives generously, knowing all our needs.
- When he gives, he does it heartily.
- He is the one true God who's able to deliver us and establish us for ever under his sovereign Lordship.
- And he makes great promises which, coming from a God who is all truth, can be fully relied on.

He is a faithful God, and each of us can approach him in prayer with the great confidence David had.

Amen.