

“Making God Fit Our Plans”
2 Samuel 7:1-7
(Preached at Trinity, February 3, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 7** is one of the most important chapters in **2 Samuel**. It records God's covenant with David, an everlasting kingdom, a kingdom fulfilled through the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. It reminds us of God's covenantal framework throughout Scripture. He is building His Kingdom and redeeming His people. This has been on display throughout history and has been revealed throughout Scripture expressed progressively through a series of covenants, each finding their ultimate fulfillment in the unveiling of Jesus Christ. This chapter is an important piece of the covenantal puzzle.
2. Thus far **2 Samuel** has set before us the establishment of the monarchy of David.
 - A. In **Chapter 2** David was anointed king over the house of Judah, but was rejected by Israel who was following Ishbosheth, the son of Saul.
But David was continuing to grow in strength.
2 Samuel 3:1 NAU - "Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually."
 - B. In **Chapter 5** David finally became king over both the houses of Israel and Judah. God continued to bless him.
2 Samuel 5:10 NAU - "David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him."
Chapter 5 describes several additional episodes relating to the reign of David. It describes David's defeat and occupation of Jerusalem. It describes his wars with the Philistines, his allegiance with Hiram, and the building of his royal house.
 - C. **Chapter 6** describes the moving of the Ark of the Covenant from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem, the City of David.
The first attempt was disastrous and resulted in the death of Uzza who failed to treat the Ark as holy. Afterward, David recognized his sinful error and they brought the Ark into Jerusalem with great rejoicing.
2 Samuel 6:15 NAU - "So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sound of the trumpet."
3. As we enter **Chapter 7**, we are taken back to the events of **Chapter 5** and the building of David's palace.
2 Samuel 5:11 NAU - "Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees and carpenters and stonemasons; and they built a house for David."
 - A. As **Chapter 7** opens the narrator draws our attention to the blessings of God upon the throne of David. This section most likely occurred towards the end of David's reign. Remember, Hiram's reign only overlapped David's by around ten years.

- B. David was living in his house and enjoying God's peace and prosperity.
2 Samuel 7:1 NAU - "Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies"
 We should note that the peace and rest David was enjoying was not David's achievement but God's – "the LORD had given him rest"
 David saw it as God's promised rest.
Deuteronomy 12:10 NAU - "When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around *you* so that you live in security"
- C. David had been given peace, power, and prosperity. This is the condition that leads most men to become proud and forget God.
- a. David instead was ashamed that he dwelt in luxurious comfort and wealth while God was still without a permanent temple.
2 Samuel 7:2 NAU - "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains."
 - b. We aren't given a detailed description of David's palace. It is simply referred to as a house of cedar. Hiram had sent cedar & stone masons. It may have been built of stone with cedar ceilings and paneling. It was a palace fit for a king.
- D. It is always disturbing to see church buildings in disrepair while the members keep their homes in pristine condition.
 David was deeply convicted that he was living in a house fit for a king, while the Ark of God was being kept in a tent. It was past time to build a temple for God.
- 4 Who could fault David for such noble thoughts? It seemed like the right thing to do. There was no reason to delay. Nathan the prophet tells David, Go and do what's on your heart.
2 Samuel 7:3 NAU - "Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your mind, for the LORD is with you."
- I. We must always maintain a heavenly priority
- A. David maintained a heavenly focus – a God focus
 1. He was king with the countless distractions of governing a nation. He was responsible for the health and safety of thousands of people. David also had multiple wives and many children
 2. David also had the distraction of wealth and power. Wealth and power have been the downfall of many.
1 Timothy 6:9-11 NAU - "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹ But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness."
 3. It was this very thing that captivated the heart of Nebuchadnezzar:
Daniel 4:30 NAU - "The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'"

4. Instead of being moved by the things built for his comfort, David felt convicted that in the face of God's rich blessings upon his life and kingdom, David had not provided God with a permanent dwelling place.
 5. David was heavenly minded. He had a keen sense of the presence of God.
Psalm 9:11 NAU - "Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; Declare among the peoples His deeds."
 6. David knew he was nothing, his kingdom was nothing without God.
Psalm 16:2 NAU - "I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good besides You."
- B. We are always in danger of being drawn aside by this present world
1. It takes little to cause a man to forget God. All around us are those who are satisfied with their lives. They have their families, their jobs, and their possessions.
 2. Paul spoke of those who maintained an emphasis on earthly things
Philippians 3:18-19 NAU - "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things."
 3. Christians are governed by a higher principle. Our focus is Christ.
Philippians 3:20 NAU - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"
Colossians 3:2 NAU - "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."
 4. How much time and energy do you give to the things of God?
- C. God intervenes upon David's plan with a surprising reaction
1. God tells Nathan to tell David to cease his plans. What seemed like a perfect plan to David was not God's plan.
 2. God didn't say no in this passage, but His word is much more direct in **1 Chron. 17**.
1 Chronicles 17:4 NAU - "Thus says the LORD, "You shall not build a house for Me to dwell in"
 3. God doesn't need a dwelling place built by the hand of man. The Temple was more for man than it was for God. It was a sign of God's Covenant presence, but it did not express God's need for an earthly dwelling place.
 4. We tend to evaluate our service to God according to our notions. We think if we come up with an idea with a good motive God should accept it. So we have motorcycle ministries, horse ministries, racecar drivers for Jesus, deer hunters for Jesus, cowboys for Jesus. We bring our rock band into the church and presume that God is impressed. The idea is Jesus should be made to fit in our latest hobby. David had a much higher goal, and yet, God did not permit it.

- II. We must be careful that our decisions and goals are properly grounded
- A. Zeal alone is not a proper gage for determining the rightness of our actions
1. David's motive was pure. It was holy. He wanted to build a temple for God. He could not rest content in his own comforts and pleasures without regard for God. Paul warned of those who were "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." This was not David's heart. He was a lover of God above all else.
 2. But he was presumptuous. God had not commanded him to build a house. God reminds David that in all the years He had traveled with Israel, not once did He suggest that they should build Him a house of cedar.
 3. John Calvin: "David was too hasty in not waiting for God to order him to do this, and so he took upon himself more than was appropriate for him."¹
- B. How often we determine a course of action thinking it to be right, but we are presumptive and do not spend time in prayer.
1. We must be cautious in how we direct our lives, even how we serve Christ. We must be heavenly minded, but Biblically grounded.
 2. We tend to evaluate our actions based upon our good intentions. If we have good intentions, we presume God must approve. Good intentions are not a sufficient rule to determine the correctness of our actions.
 3. Our Confession of Faith gives us some excellent guidelines to determine the rightness of our action. It is in the section on good works. There are objective considerations to determine if our good works are approved.
Chapter 16: Of Good Works:
 "Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God, and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God."
- a. David's desire to build the Temple fulfilled two of these. He trusted his life and soul to God. He saw the throne of God as far more important than his own. His heart was enflamed by the glory of God. But he failed to wait upon a clear word from God. Even Nathan the prophet failed to seek a word from God. David presumed that because his intentions were good, it must have been approved by God. It didn't seem like something to mull over.
 - b. In our good intentions do we make sure our actions are consistent with the teachings of God's Word. Is our mind rightly informed by the Word of God so that we have discernment?
Romans 12:2 NAU - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

¹ Calvin, John, *Sermons on 2 Samuel*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992) page 295.

4. Are you willing to seek counsel to help you make decisions? Some feel they are too mature to seek counsel. It is actually a sign of immaturity? Have you noticed that children seldom seek counsel before they act? Instead they leap forth without thinking.

Proverbs 1:5 NAU - "A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,"

5. Our counselors, however, do not relieve us of our duty to pray and seek the Word of God. Nathan's immediate counsel was not right. Human counsellors are not infallible. But God's Word is infallible.

Nathan's sin was presuming he knew what was right without seeking God.

Human counselors are foolish if they think they can rely on their own wisdom.

Conclusion:

1. It is good to be heavenly minded. We must set our minds upon the throne of Christ and give ourselves zealously to the labors of His Kingdom.
2. Zeal is a good thing, but zeal without knowledge carries many dangers. There were multitudes following after Christ in John 6, but soon rejected His teaching and left Him. When Jesus was in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday the hearts of the people were enflamed with zeal, but were soon yelling, "Crucify Him!" Saul of Tarsus was enflamed with zeal in persecuting Christians.
3. Even sincere zeal can be misplaced. David was a man after God's own heart. He was a man of faith, a man who loved God greatly. And yet, we find here God had to correct his zealous plans.
4. Our plans must be directed by the Word of God.
Psalms 119:99-105 NAU - "I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. ¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts. ¹⁰¹ I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. ¹⁰² I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, For You Yourself have taught me. ¹⁰³ How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth! ¹⁰⁴ From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. Nun. ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."
Calvin: "We are admonished always to carry out our devotion according to the rule which God has given us. For while we should be aflame with an ardent zeal to dedicate ourselves to God, we must also be prudent enough to find out the right way to do it, so that we will not do everything that comes into our head, like men who give themselves liberty to do what they have dreamed up, claiming that their intentions are good. Zeal cannot be considered good unless it is properly directed."²
5. John Woodhouse: "To honor God by building a splendid house for the ark of the covenant seemed right to David in the circumstances as he understood them. But he was wrong. How often Christian people have devised projects (often building projects) that seem to them to be honoring to God. But are they? Do we fully recognize that God does not need our projects?"³
6. Even after we have determined our actions are according to the Word of God, we must be prudent and patient in carrying them out.

² Calvin, John, *Sermons on 2 Samuel*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992) page 297.

³ John Woodhouse, *2 Samuel: Your Kingdom Come*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 204.