

Sermon - Dec 21, 2014 - Advent 4

## The King's House

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16



Grace and Peace from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Are you ready for Christmas? Some are, some aren't! There was a time when I would ask people if they were ready for Christmas, not much anymore, because I got the usual responses: 'ready as can be' or 'never ready,' and seldom I would get an "all set." Aren't there so many things to do just before Christmas? In fact so much to do in our everyday lives!

You ought to see my "Honey Do" list at home! And each member of the family's list of chores as well, there are so many projects, big and small, that I just never seem to accomplish. It's especially true during the holidays. Maybe half of our decorations won't even get out of the boxes, not to mention the gifts that won't get purchased and the cards that won't get sent.

But there is a much more serious list, the list of the things I want to do and you want to do for God and never accomplish. Now, you do have a "to do list" right? I do hope so. And what's on your "To Do" list for God? What's on our congregation's list?

In our Old Testament reading for today, from 2 Samuel chapter seven, King David had a "to do list" as well, but that even he could not do: Building the Kingdom of God. It cannot be by Human effort but is perfectly accomplished by the eternal King, Jesus, through His people yes, but not by ourselves.

No, King David didn't want to build God's Kingdom, he wanted to build a temple for God, a house for God to live in.

After all David had achieved, the conquest of enemies, peace in the area, (v 1); the building of infrastructure in the city, David felt accomplished! His initial construction projects in the city, however, were for other things (5:9; also 1 Chr 15:1), including his own house (5:11). Although he did bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem where the King's residency was now (2 Samuel 6), and what an entrance it was that David danced naked, leading the entrance parade into Jerusalem.

But after all was done there was something lacking. David had prioritized building things for himself and others rather than building for God. He was now living in a house of "cedar" but God still lived in a tent. Seeing this condition out of his desire came the idea and plan to build a temple for God. God did not ask for it, but it was David's desire to do something for God.

Now I have said many times before that before we do something it has to be God's will and even allowing God to put things in our hearts so we do them. But I also believe that you can purpose to do something for God, just that bring it to God's attention first. I also believe that God does honor your desires when they are done according to God's will and purpose, or at least allows you to do it.

David had a desire in his heart and God gives him permission, and not only gives him permission but God enhances David's plan with a greater promise. That David's

kingdom was going to be well established and with greatness, and that the Temple was going to be built. God allows them for both serve God's purpose as well, first the establishment of a perpetual King as He would come later, and God's presence in and with his people forever; that is His will.

The fact is that God didn't want a house made out of wood or stone, instead he wanted to live in tents, and that bore a divine and fundamental call for the people to look beyond them, as the writer of Hebrews says in the New Testament: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.<sup>9</sup> By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.<sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Heb. 11:8–10)

Yet, as he authorized Israel's feeble kings, He used it, to foreshow the coming of the King of Kings (Jn 18:36), God also would allow and even bless the construction of the temple as a type of his indestructible dwelling among us (Jn 2:19–22). In other words kings and the temple point and show the True King and the True Temple! Jesus Christ.

And so David was given permission to build that temple here on earth, and the idea came from his heart. Although God allowed it, it wasn't David who was going to finally build it, but his son.

Yes he was successful in consolidating his power in his kingdom and in establishing his headquarters in Jerusalem, but shortly after these achievements, an enormous irony occurs, in what happened after this scene, and it's all in his own house! David's sin with Bathsheba, their child dies; there is incest among his children, and to top it all one of his sons rebels against him. The rest of the book of 2 Samuel tells it all.

David not only would not build the temple as God's house, but he also failed at building God's "house" within his family and personal behavior. Talking about a soap opera! Within just two generations, David's kingdom would be split by civil war; in just a few centuries, David's monarchy would be outwardly destroyed. Really by our own standards David was a failure, and more so by God's standards. He shouldn't be a king, he shouldn't rule over his people. Our critics are ready to point that out against us and with good reason. But what they don't want to recognize is what David was able to recognize, that everything happens because of God's grace. David prayed these words to God: "Who am I, Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"<sup>19</sup> And as if this were not enough in your sight, Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant—and this decree, Sovereign LORD, is for a mere human!

All through David his life and more so just before he died, David shows a keen awareness that he and the entire nation are blessed only by Yahweh's grace, by Yahweh's redemption, by Yahweh "making himself a name" (7:23).

Even in this chapter there is an indication of how the Gospel works, that while David desires to do something for God, it is God who shows again, what he does for David and for all of us.

And remind us that everything we do will one day be gone. David indeed would die and be buried (Acts 2:29), his earthly accomplishments turning to dust like those of every one of us sinners.

How true David's own words came true for him, and come true for each one of us as well that: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Ps 127:1). God does encourage your heart, as he did David's (v 3), to look to do things for him. But what is most important is always to know what he has done for you in the past and what he does for you and through you in the future.

It is always our gracious God who constructs what is perfect and lasting.

God reminded David that it was he, Yahweh, who in the past had done everything for him and for all the people: a. Yahweh had delivered them from slavery in Egypt. b. Yahweh had shepherded them. c. Yahweh had given them rest from their enemies. d. Yahweh had indeed already provided a place for his ark! Those are historical aspects that seem too repetitious but in the repetitious historical accounts we see that what God promises He will do. And that too should give each and every one of us hope and trust that God too will help us in our time of need and in the time of prosperity to know that it's God who has done it all for us and through us.

In fact He has already done it for you. A quick look at your life will see the same sinful insufficiencies David saw in his life: (1) Your priorities have displaced God's priorities, haven't they? Once again at the beginning of the year we do come up with goals and new year resolutions, and many of those resolutions I'm sure have to do with your spiritual life which includes church, yet a few months into the year those same resolutions faded already. (2) but there is more, just as we David's household, our families are racked by sin, especially our own sins against every commandment of God. Let's face it, it is our sad reality, and as much as we don't want to think about them or discuss them, there is a reality none-the-less. (3) and to top it all, you and I will die and be buried, and do you know what will happen with everything we built here? Everything will turn to dust!

But here is the Good News, God does everything you need! The Good news is that he delivered you from sin and its slavery; that's what Jesus came to do. He said "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

That's what he has done for you. He adopted you in your baptism, and he is shepherding you with His Word and the Sacraments. He has conquered Satan and all that would threaten you, his lamb. And He, the true Temple has come His name is Jesus Christ. The greatest accomplishment you need in your relationship with God is done by him—Jesus! So now, hand-in-hand with him, he grants you the desires of your heart!

And when your time comes he will provide you with an eternal "house," a home for you with God, and that too is the work of Jesus. (Jn 14:2; Eph 2:18–22; Rev 21:3).

Now, dear Friends, the focus of this season of Advent is looking at Jesus coming as David's heir, why? Because you always hear the Scripture's prophetic voice guiding you in Christ's grace, showing you the Way, the Truth and the Life, and granting you the forgiveness of your sins. And yes there will be troubles at home still, and we will still die physically, but never forget that the Lord is building the house. And sometimes He does take His time, with a purpose, so don't despair, don't be afraid, but live in the sure confidence of his presence for He is your Temple. And know that He commissions to

“do all that is in your heart” (v 3), knowing that the Lord is with you, and knowing that you too are an heir of David.

Now, imagine this. In some parts of the scriptures we hear Jesus being called “Son of David.” Now, if he was called Son of David, as an heir to David, despite what David did, which blows our mind—how much can he accomplish in you, imagine your sins forgiven, and now enabled and strengthened to do what your heart desires for God and his kingdom. So don’t say, I can’t, or I’m not used to it or anything like that, for we are made anew in Him.

The tabernacle and the temple of the Old Testament did not endure. The cloth tent was never intended by God to be a permanent structure. The temple, eventually built by David’s son Solomon, was destroyed after four hundred years. Its replacements also were demolished fairly quickly. God wanted his people to have lasting hope, not in earthly things or in their own accomplishments, but in his eternal King, Jesus, and his eternal kingdom. May enduring hope in Christ be your celebration this next week and always!