

LIFE CHANGING PRAYER – PART 2

Prayer Found in the Heart

Prayer with the lip, prayer with bended knee and uplifted hand is worth nothing if the heart be absent. – Spurgeon

Today, we will look at the story of man who had a plan. The man was David, a man after God's own heart. His plan was a godly one. In fact, his plan was born out of his desire to glorify God. However, his plan was not God's plan. And from the prayer of this man's heart we see his gratitude when he came to understand that God's plan for him was so much grander than anything he could ever dream about. *Psalm 37:4 (ESV)* ⁴ *Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

A time of peace had come to the kingdom of Israel. King David was no longer hiding in a cave. In fact, he was living in a fine house of cedar. While he certainly would have been thankful for his own home, he realized that there was no permanent place to carry on the work of the LORD – only a tent. Out of that awareness a dream was born to build a permanent physical temple for the glory of God.

Read 2 Samuel 7:2-3 (ESV) ² *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."* ³ *And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."*

This is the first time that the prophet Nathan is mentioned in scripture and David's plan was such a good idea to Nathan that he immediately **jumped to the conclusion** that David's dream to build a temple to glorify God must certainly be the Lord's will.

What is essentially good, and perceived to be for God's glory, is not necessarily God's will. – David Legge

In Nathan's response to David's grand idea, we see a pitfall that is still easy for us to fall into today. Because Nathan thought the idea was good himself, he spoke before he had received a Word from the LORD concerning David's plan. Nathan and David lived in the time before the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the hearts of His children. David listened to the prophets. *Hebrews 1:1-2 (ESV)* ¹ *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,* ² *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*

Today, because of what God's Son has done for us, we have the privilege of going directly to the throne of grace to personally seek and discover God's will. *Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)* ⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.* ⁶ *In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

Just because something sounds good does not necessarily mean it is the LORD's will for a person or a church even though it might be the LORD's will for another person or another church. We read in **2 Samuel 7:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, The LORD told Nathan that David was not to build a temple and he was instructed to return and tell David.*

It seems its always been a big question as to why the LORD did not want David to do something so wonderful as build the temple. David clearly understood the LORD's reasoning. He said in **1 Chronicles 22:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth.*

Unlike David in this particular situation, we may never know why we are denied something or why something is taken away from us; however, we can know for certain ...*that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*
Romans 8:28

Our focus on this story of David should not be on why he was NOT allowed to build the temple. Our focus should be on the better plan that the LORD had for David instead.

Read 2 Samuel 7:12-13 (ESV) ¹² *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.* ¹³ *He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

One of the wonders of having God's Word from beginning to end is that we have the privilege of seeing how God's plan continues to connect one generation to another. This covenant God made with David to establish an eternal kingdom through him is known as the Davidic Covenant. And yet, from the scriptures we know that David's earthly dynasty ended four centuries after his personal reign. However, God's covenant with David did not end. The prophet Isaiah spoke of another descendant of David.

Read Isaiah 9:6-7 (ESV) ⁶ *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* ⁷ *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

As the prophet, Isaiah, foretold, centuries later a direct descendant of David, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem. Concerning His birth, an angel spoke to Mary.

Read Luke 1:32 (ESV) ³² *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,*

And in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, we see the descendant of David reigning forever.

Read Revelation 11:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”*

From all of these passages and more, we know that the scope of the plan the LORD had for His servant, David, was so much more than a building that David had dreamed about.

God’s gifts put man’s best dreams to shame.

Read 2 Samuel 7:18-21 (ESV) ¹⁸ *Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and said, “Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? ¹⁹ And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord GOD. You have spoken also of your servant’s house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD! ²⁰ And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord GOD! ²¹ Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it.*

In our time, we are so inundated with noise and activity that it is often a battle to sit quietly before the LORD. To me the picture of sitting during conversation with God denotes quality time. Even with friends and family, we tend to have conversations ‘on the go’ with so many continuing interruptions, the beeping of texts and emails, ringing of phones and news alerts that we lose our concentration and sometimes never finish a conversation. How much more does that happen in our conversations with the Lord?

As I first considered this lesson, I thought it would be about the difficulty of receiving the ‘no’ answers to our prayers. However, after going deeper into the scripture for me this study is about having a heart that is willing to believe that our God gives great gifts in unexpected ways – at unexpected times – ways our finite minds cannot comprehend.

Pentecostal pastor, Phil Morgan says, “David was humble when he came before the LORD. David was not a perfect man — he made his share of mistakes. He knew what it was to really blow it. But one thing about David — HE ALWAYS KNEW HIS PLACE. Whereas Saul became proud because of his position as king — David never suffered from the same false illusions of grandeur. He never forgot that it was the Lord who had raised him up in HIS purposes. And he kept a humble heart.”

Read 2 Samuel 7:22-25 (ESV) ²² *Therefore you are great, O LORD God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. ²³ And*

who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? ²⁴ And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O LORD, became their God. ²⁵ And now, O LORD God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken.

As David sat before the Lord, his heart was worshipful. For David, it was God and His glory that mattered. Morgan goes on to say that we are a generation who is concerned that “God is there to meet our needs. To make us “feel good”. To provide us with a spiritual “high”. NOT to make too great a demand. NOT to require too much. Look at David — he’s just received God’s gracious word of promise. God is going to lavish His blessing on David. He’s going to make David’s name glorious. WHERE IS DAVID? He’s sitting humbly in God’s presence GIVING ALL THE GLORY BACK. Giving the glory to One who is the only rightful recipient of it.”

***Read 2 Samuel 7:26-29 (ESV)** ²⁶ And your name will be magnified forever, saying, ‘The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,’ and the house of your servant David will be established before you. ²⁷ For you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. ²⁸ And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. ²⁹ Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord GOD, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever.”*

Do you believe God when He provides answers to a prayer in a way that you did not request? This message that David received from the LORD via Nathan was something magnificent – it might have been either too great a thing for a mortal man to believe or it might have filled David’s heart with pride. But, in David’s response to the LORD’s answer we see the response of a man who had a heart that pleased God. David believed what the LORD said even though it was incredible. And as the recipient of the LORD’s graciousness, David remained humble and worshipful. **Psalm 149:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation.*

It is the Devil’s lie that heroes of faith were limited to biblical times. **2 Chronicles 16:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him...* This promise of God is as true today as it was in Old Testament times.

We like David can have a heart that delights our Savior. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking if our desires are good they are always from the LORD. As we see from David’s experience that is not always the case. Jesus explained in **Matthew 7:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*