

Who is Giving to Whom? //2

Samuel 7:1-26 // *The Search for a King*

CMO announcement...

Intro: In light of our CMO, perhaps this is a good time to ask the question: How do I know that I've done enough? Generosity is one of those things that whenever you start talking about it some people are always asking, "How do I know I've given enough?"

- Here's a rare confession you won't often hear from a Pastor. I've spent a lot of time in my life feeling guilty.
- People come along talking about needs in the world and how people who are really committed to Jesus will be involved...
 - Like, in college, I learned that there are 1.8 billion people who had never heard the name of Jesus, and so, naturally, real Christians love missions and they do something about that. So I began to go on LOTS of mission trips. I went to 25 countries w/in 10 years. I even lived in a fundamentalist Muslim country for 2 years.
 - Then later, I was told that real Christians love the poor. I remember a sermon where a guy asked if we loved our comforts more than the poor. He even said, "The pictures you have up on your wall. Do you know many orphans in India the money you spent on your pictures could have fed? Do you really love your wall decorations more than you love the poor, you fat, disgusting, overfed American?" (he didn't say that last part, but that's what I felt like he was saying)
 - Then, later, I became aware of the adoption crisis... real Christians, of course, love the fatherless. How many homeless, fatherless kids are there and shouldn't you be taking 1 or maybe 15 into your house?

- Real Christians should care about the problems in our inner cities... I heard about people who moved into rough areas of town... I thought, should I pack up and move the family downtown and live in the ghetto?
- Real Christians love refugees: How many people from Burma do you have in your basement? Or, should you even have a basement since you're into missions and so you live only in a 500 sq foot house and give the rest of your money away to overseas work?
- The hardest one for me was in college when I was reading 1 Cor and the Apostle Paul explains that you can be most effective in ministry if you are single... so, I thought, if I really love Jesus and His mission, and I want my life to have maximum impact, how could I seek marriage? I tried that for a while. I tried that for a while. I quit. I realized that was cruel and unusual punishment to all women everywhere.

So here's the question: How do you know what God specifically wants from *you* and when you've done enough?

Some of you are asking that on a more basic level... at Christmas time you are wondering how you can get back into God's good graces. You come back to church and you're like, "What does God actually want from me, and how much do I have to do to get back on good terms with him?" (A lot of you feel like you're so far gone there is not much point, and your only hope is that maybe God grades on the curve... then you'd have a chance).

All these questions are answered in this text with the most profound biblical truth.

- 2 Samuel 7 is one of the most famous Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. What I love about it is that it comes in response to a question David is asking about what God wants from him in terms of an offering.

- That's the secret of the Bible: our most pressing, day-to-day life-questions are answered by deep biblical truths.
 - Sometimes people feel like it's "deep doctrine" over here, and then "real life questions" over there.
 - No, our most pressing, relevant questions are answered by the deepest biblical truths... and you'll see that today.

[7:1] Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, [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."

- David is now thoroughly established as the King; God has given him a stable kingdom, he's defeated all his enemies, the land is prospering and at rest.
- Nathan is the nation's pastor;
- ...and they are sitting together out on David's back porch after dinner with a couple of decaf coffees, overlooking Jerusalem... maybe a pipe... David's eyes fall onto the tabernacle outside of his palace, which was a tent that God had had His people build for Him, where He said His presence would dwell among them.
- Now, by this time, the tabernacle was a few hundred years old now, which means it was probably getting threadbare...
- So, David says to Nathan, "You know, this isn't right. I live in a nice house that smells like cedar." (Cedar: That's some expensive stuff, isn't it? *Bed, Bath and Beyond*, 1 cedar clothes hanger costs \$15.00. *How do you know that?*)
- David says, "I live in a really nice house, and God lives in a tent... or a warehouse."
- Well, Nathan responds like any pastor responds when someone who is really wealthy comes to him and says, "I want to use my considerable resources to do something in the kingdom of God." He says,

[3] And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."

- "Go, my brother, and do all that is in your heart."
- This is all pretty standard stuff right here.

[4] But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, [5] "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in?' 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in?' [6] 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.

- This is one of the most amazing things about God in the Bible. He always desires to be *with* His people. Where they are, He wants to be; in the same conditions they are in; He wants to share in their pain.
- While they are wandering in tents, and homeless, God wants to be the same condition.
- It's called "the incarnational principle." God taking on our circumstances Himself and sharing in them.

He continues... [7] In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word... saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"

- To me, there is a certain playfulness here... "You're going to build me a house, David? You think I'm worried about my accommodations down there?"
- David, have I ever said, "I'm tired of this drafty old tent?"
- "You think I want a cedar house? Cedar is for hamsters, David. My streets are made of gold. You got no idea what my real house looks like up here."
- And if really needed a nice place to live, I'm not coming to you to ask for one.

[8] "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. [9] 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.

[10] 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... [11]... And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that *the LORD will make you a house.*

- What's the emphasis on there?
- Who is the actor?
- God says, "This is not about you giving to me, David. This is about me giving to you."
- This is not about you building me a house; I'm building you one.
- David, I'm not sitting around in heaven going, "Oh my gosh... if David would just spare me a little money I could get out of these squalid living conditions and build a real kingdom."
- David, I created all this, I don't need anything from you." I'm the giver and you're the receiver.

[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.

- Now, here we begin one of the most famous Messianic prophecies:
- From you, David, is going to come a son who will rule forever! He's the one who will build my temple on earth.

Now, look at this next part, because it is a little confusing.

[14] I will be to him a father, and he will 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, [15] but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

- Some people get tripped up here... because they say, "Wait, I thought this was a Messianic prophecy... but how could this prophecy be about Jesus?" It says, "...if he commits iniquity

God will punish him"... and I thought Jesus never committed any sin?

- Great question: Most biblical prophecies have a **dual meaning**. There is an immediate meaning, and then there is an ultimate one.
- The 1st fulfillment of this prophecy was David's son, Solomon.
 - Solomon would build the most incredible temple of God, and the throne of David would be established through him. And even though Solomon would do some really stupid, Saul-like things, like having 700 wives and worshipping idols, God did not strip the throne from him like he did from Saul. That is what is promised here.
- But, Solomon is not the forever king God had promised. He'd be a pretty big disappointment and ultimately his sons would lose the kingdom and Israel would be driven out of the land into captivity.
- We needed another king, greater than Solomon.
- So this prophecy points through Solomon, beyond him, to another descendant of David who would come, Jesus.
- He would be born in Bethlehem, David's home town.
- He would establish the real temple. He would point to the temple in Jerusalem and say, "*You can tear this down and I'll rebuild it in 3 days.*" And everyone was like, "What? You couldn't rebuild that temple in 3 days." But that's because he was saying that the real temple was not the house that Solomon built, but His own body... *that's where the presence of God really came down to earth and incarnated itself and dwelt among His people.* And when they tore it down at the cross, Jesus resurrected in 3 days by His own power.
- And then, Jesus said, "Not only that, after I'm resurrected, I'll come to live inside of you through the Holy Spirit, making you the temple of God."
- So, Jesus says, pointing at the physical temple, this temple... is actually pointing you to a greater temple, where God in me, will come to live inside of men.

[14] When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, [15] but my steadfast love will not depart from him...)

- This text says (vs. 14) that when David's son committed sin, God would discipline and punish him with "the stripes of men."
 - Do you see the beauty of the Gospel in that? Jesus would not have to be punished for his sin, but He would be bruised for our sin; the punishment for our peace would be upon Him, and by His stripes we would be healed.
- Jesus (vs. 15) would assure us that God's steadfast love would never leave us by taking the stripes we deserved for sin in our place.
- The real Son of David that is being pointed to here, the Son that would build the real temple of God and establish God's presence with His people forever, would be Jesus.

And so God concludes, *[16] And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."*

Now, David's response: *[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... [20] And what more can David say to you? [21] Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant **know it.***

- Salvation is not primarily about you doing something for God. Salvation is about knowing something—sitting in stunned awe in the presence of God, realizing what He's done for you.
- Yes, in Christianity you will do things for God. But what you do will be a grateful response to what He's done for you.

[22] Therefore you are great, (who is great? You, David, because you built God, a house? No, You are great...) **O LORD God.** because you gave me a house and did for me what I could never do for myself. The house of God's salvation on earth will not say "Built by David," but "built by God.")

For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you...

*[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? [26] And your name will be magnified forever...*

The world is not supposed to look at Christians and say, "Wow, what great and impressive things they have done for God," but "Wow, what great things God has done for them."

What is supposed to stand out about us as people look at us is God's grace and His power that is evident, exuding from our lives...

We are like trophies; works of art and demonstrations of God's power.

- (Remember the China fireworks at the Olympics? We were to look at that and say, "Wow, look how far China has come! That firework displays shows you that they have a great technological ability and a pretty strong economy." That pyrotechnic display was supposed to make us stand in awe of China's new greatness.
- **Christians are to be God's pyrotechnic display. Our lives are supposed to burn with evidences of God's miraculous greatness.**

A few absolutely crucial biblical principles that are embedded in this story that you have to get to make sense of your life:

1. The grace principle:

- What David is desiring to do here was pretty common for kings in the ancient world. When a king came to the throne, it was common for them to build a house for their god to thank them for getting them to the throne and then try to make the god happy enough that the god would establish their kingdom forever.
 - King Tut is a great example. He built a big temple for “Amon-Re” the Egyptian god, and Amon-Re said in an Egyptian oracle that because the temple was so nice he would grant King Tut a kingdom that spanned the globe and lasted for millions of years. Not sure if King Tut got his money back on that one... needs
- So, the order in every other religion in the ancient world was, “King builds temple for God; beauty of temple makes God famous in the land; God thanks king by giving him a strong kingdom.”
- This order, which is the order of every religion in the world, is here rejected by God.
- God says, “David, I brought *you* up. I defeat *your* enemies. I will establish *you*. I will make *your name* great. I will build *you* a house... This is all Me, David.
- You are not earning anything. When people look at you, they are not going to admire what you have accomplished for me; they are going to admire the grace that I have given to you.” The house I give to you is not going to say ‘Built by David for God’; but ‘built by God for David.’
- The grace principle: God’s salvation is given to us as a gift, not as something we earn.
- This is the part of the Gospel where most people stumble. It’s a gift, costly for the giver, free for the recipient. Salvation is a gift that God gives where He paid the price.
- So people ask, “How much is enough? How often do I need to come to church? How much do I have to give for God to be happy with me?” That question shows you don’t get the Gospel! Salvation is a gift!

- You say, “How much is enough?” Jesus has done enough, and He gives it as a gift to all who will receive.
- Christianity is not about you living a good life and then giving your record to God, but Jesus living the perfect life and then giving His record to you, as a gift.
- He lived the life you were supposed to have lived and then died the death you should have died and gave it to you as a gift, if you will receive it.

2. The giving principle: Shortened version of it: God doesn’t need us.

Salvation, start to finish, is of God.

Jesus went to the cross *alone*. Everyone abandoned him. Like David, he ran out onto that field alone to face the giant of our sin while we all stood in unfaithfulness on the sidelines.

When Jesus was raised from the dead, it was by his power, with no help from us. The disciples weren’t beside him with their crash carts going, “Come on Jesus.” *Hands on chest...* Remember that scene in Princess Bride where they try to blow air into the dead guy? That’s not what happened at the resurrection. The Father brought Jesus back from the dead all by Himself.

When Jesus establishes His eternal kingdom on earth in the future, it is something he will do alone.

- The book of Revelation says that the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, prepared by God, not rises up from the earth.

In the same way, right now, in the present, it is God alone who builds His kingdom.

- When Jesus sent His disciples out, He said, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it,” not,

“You will build my church, and I’ll be around to assist you when you need help.”

- I’ve told you that one of my favorite scenes in Acts... after laying on the disciples the GC, he tells them to go and do nothing... wait for the HS. What is being taught is that God alone can build His kingdom. You can’t do anything without me. ***Apart from me you can do... what church? NOTHING.***
- Remember a few months ago we went through the story of Esther... Esther is in a place where it looks like she is the only one who can bring salvation to Israel... When Mordecai goes in to tell Esther she needs to go appear before the King to save the people of Israel, he says, “Esther, if you don’t do this, God will bring salvation from another place, but you and your family will die. God will get his work done, Esther, but you’ll miss the blessing.”

God doesn’t need you.

You say, “Pastor, you are blowing my mind.” God doesn’t need me? Does that mean that I just spend all my money on myself?”

No. You do what David did. You offer yourself fully to God in grateful response to His grace to you, but then do what He tells you to do. Let me show you this.

- **2 Chronicles 6:7**, “*Because it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well that it was in your heart.*” God is saying, “Your desire is good... and reasonable.” I mean, anyone who has experienced God’s grace should want to give back to Him.
- God says “no,” that’s not what I want. And I don’t need you to do it. But look what David did in response: **1 Chronicles 22:2–5**² *David... set stonecutters to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God.*³ *David also provided great quantities of iron for nails for the doors of the gates and for clamps, as well as bronze in quantities beyond weighing,*⁴ *and cedar timbers without number...*⁵ *For David said, “Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must*

be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands. I will therefore make preparation for it.” So David provided materials in great quantity before his death.

- David did not build the temple, but he generously provided the materials for it. David’s heart overflowed with love and gratefulness for God, and any chance he had to show it, he did it!

So, what should your attitude toward giving be? “God, all that I have is yours. I want to give back to you and others as you have so graciously given to me. What do you want me to do?”

- In Acts, when Jesus told them to go and wait for the HS, when He came, it’s not like they sat around and said, “HS, glad you’re here. We’re going to go fishing.” They said, “Lord, here am I, send me! And then the Holy Spirit told them what to do.”
- **Story of my call...**
 - Up to that moment, it had been “God if you make me go, I’ll go.” Now it was, “God, you saved my life when I had nothing. I want to be used by you to bring salvation to others. Use me! Please... how do you want my life to be used?”
 - That ought to be the attitude of every Christian. “God, there are millions of people who have never heard about Jesus, there are people who are dying and suffering all around the world... God you came to me when I was without hope and I had nothing, I want to give my life for them as you gave Yours for me. Send me!” How could you not feel that way?
 - But after you say, that, you still have to be SENT. Romans 10... after Paul lays out a case that there’s only one way to be saved, and people have to hear about Jesus... “How can they call on the one in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how can

they preach* unless they are SENT?" **Romans 10:14-15**

- Not, "unless we go," but "unless we are SENT." The Holy Spirit has to do the sending.
- *The HS has to do the sending before the going does any good.*
- Not all of you are called to every single ministry; all of you are charged to offer your life to God in grateful response and say, "God, how can my life be used?"
- How could you truly have experienced God's grace in the Gospel and *not* feel that way? How could you go on piling up treasure for yourself after having been rescued from certain and imminent damnation by the extravagant rescue of Jesus Christ?
- Summit... Do you realize how much God can do with us when that is our attitude?
 - 5 loaves and 2 fish
 - 2 mites
 - In both cases, the amount is inconsequential. It's the percentage that counts. God is able to take the 2 mites and do more with it for world salvation than the Bill Gates foundation can do with all its money... If you would offer all that you have to God with a grateful heart and tell Him you'll do exactly with it what He wants, it will blow your mind what God can do with you.

Here is the giving principle: *We offer ourselves fully to God; earnestly desire to see the mercy that has come to us go to others; and then obey the Holy Spirit in what He shows us to do.*

- You say, "Well how do I know what God wants me to do?" Start with the needs right in front of you.
- James 2 says that if someone is standing at your door with a need, it is God's intention for you to fill it.

- Then ask, Is there some area of passion growing in you? Where do you dream about showing mercy? Get busy doing that, trusting that that desire is from God, and let Him guide you from there!
- Dream great things for God, and then attempt great things for Him. God can tell you no if He needs to.
- As a church, God has given us dreams and plans... and as a part of this church, that is one of the things, as a part of this church, you can dream together with us.
- I'm dreaming about transforming RDU> The 5 areas. Planting 1000 churches. Let's get on with the dreams.

3rd principle, got to do it quickly... **3. The Disappointment principle**

In this passage, you see David have a dream to do something and God tell him "no."

- Ever had a desire to do something and God said 'no'? And you can't figure out why?
- Unfortunately, most of us don't get "the Nathan" who comes and explains it. Doors just close in front of us and we say, "Why?"
- You can see here from this passage that God has his reasons for our disappointments, and failures, and things we really want that he says "no" on.

God said no to David in this passage primarily because He didn't want people to make a bigger deal out of David instead of God.

- Here's a mind-boggling thought: Do you ever think maybe God ordains failure in your life so that you'll make a big deal out of God, and not out of your success?
 - Maybe God knows that if you succeed in something, you'll find more joy in your success than you do Him? ***What if God sometimes ordains failure because he wants you to find your joy in Him, not in your success?***
 - Not always, or usually... God loves to give success... but sometimes.

- And what if God lets you fail so you and everyone else can see that God is the hero, not you? I've had some disappointing or humiliating things happen to me as your pastor, and I thought, "God, what if you are letting me be humiliated so that people will hope in you, not me." I don't like it, but if it will direct your attention to God, not me, that will be good.
- Like Paul said, God's allowing me to be humiliated so you won't make a big deal out of me, but a big deal out of God. And that's ok. And if I need to be humiliated so God can be glorified, that's ok.
- I want to have that attitude; I don't know if I do all the time, but I want to.

So, here's the last question this passage brings up to you. God is building an eternal kingdom. It will last forever. Are you part of that?

- God told David: there's only one kingdom that will last; the one I built. Given enough time, your body will fail. Your business will fail. Even your family... on your deathbed, they can't go with you. Jesus is the only thing that lasts forever.
- Here is the awesome invitation: Jesus offers to give you this Kingdom. He died to make you part of it. But you have to let Him be King ... Who is the King of your life?
- Even more awesome... He wants to use you as a part of His kingdom, to help build it. He doesn't need you, as I've shown you, but He'll use your life and give it eternal value. He'll give you a life that counts.
- The greatest privilege of my life is asking God to show Himself through me in big, huge ways. In my family. In this community. In UPG's. I ask BIG things that show off His power, not mine.
- Alexander...
- This is about God's power and generosity. Ask Him to show it in you and through you and He'll love to show off the greatness of His name in and through your life.

[22] Therefore you are great, O LORD God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you... [26] And your name will be magnified forever...

If those 2 verses are the theme verses in your life, it will have eternal value... otherwise, no matter what you accomplish, your life will be wasted. What are you doing with your life?

These could be the last 2 verses in the Bible:

Bullpen:

[14] 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, [15] but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. [16] And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” [17] In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

[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.

, 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.”

19] You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD!

- ~~What you should notice is that God has chosen to be in the same condition his people are in. Incarnational principle. They hadn't had a nation, so God hasn't required a permanent temple.~~

- Eugene Peterson: *“I think David was just about to cross over a line from being full of God to full of himself. David riding the crest of fame, having decisively defeated the opposition, united God’s people, and capture the allegiance of all Israel, he was heading toward success, and he’d begun to think he could do God a favor. But if David continues to develop along these lines, he will be ruined as a representative of God’s kingdom. If anyone of us develops an identity in which God and God’s grace is less important to who we are than our own action and importance, our ability to represent God’s kingdom is utterly ruined.”*

(**Answers to prayer; love and grace and generosity; forgiveness and acceptance)

- Here, real quick... David’s life is saved at some pretty strategic points good counsel. It happens too much in David’s life to be accidental. (Jonathan; Abigail; Nathan). You should learn from that. David the king... and he depends on good counsel. Nobody should be an island. I’ve told you that some of you, your lives are falling apart because no one can speak into your life. Things that grow in a secret garden almost always grow mutant. Why we push small groups and being known here. ~~David is the king of Israel and he makes time for it. You should too. Period.~~ Your spiritual health; the health of your marriage, your family... all rise or fall on being intimately connected to other members of the body of Christ.

God didn’t save you because He needed something from you. He saved you so that you could have the joy of knowing Him... so that

you could sit in adoration about who He is and how gracious and powerful He is.