



DATE: Oct. 25, 2020 (21st Sun. after Pentecost)
SCRIPTURE: 2 Samuel 7:1-17
TITLE: David wants to build a Temple.

David is well known as the protagonist in the “David and Goliath” battle. The world outside the Church and Biblical faith understands that David was the quintessential underdog and overcame great odds to find victory. In the story we share today however, David is no underdog. He is at the height of his power and decides that his next project will be to build a House of stone and cedar for God.

At first the prophet Nathan is totally on board. “Go for it, boss. Everything you do has worked so far, God is with you,” (my paraphrase).

There is a strong tension in this story between David’s faith and his ambition. Is David wanting to build a Temple for God because of his adoration of the Lord? Is he a faithful follower who wants to give back to God by providing a glorious home of stone and cedar?

This is how the idea is framed at first. David says, “I live in a fine palace, but God lives in a tent,” and decides to do something about it.

Or is David acting out of his own self-interest? He has already built his great city and moved the ark of the covenant into it. He has consolidated his power, overcome the threat of Saul, and is making Jerusalem the center of his new United Kingdom. By making a Temple, he can keep God just where he wants him. He can ensure that the pilgrimages, the rituals, the sacrifices, are all made in his city and under his thumb.

David knows that by exalting God, he is actually exalting himself. Then Nathan goes to bed and God wakes him up to say, “Not so fast, my friend. Did I ever ask for a house?”

God isn’t interested in being exalted by David. God reminds David (through Nathan) that it is not David who will make God great, but that God is the one who makes David great. God tells him, “I found you in the pasture and set you up to shepherd my people” (my paraphrase).

David will not make God a house, but God will build a house for David. This is a house that is not made with human hands, but made eternal. God promises David a house that will be a dynasty. God

extends a promise to David that will be steadfast and endure forever.

In this moment the promise of God shifts. In Deuteronomy, the promise of God is couched in conditional terms. The word “if” appears 74 times in the Book of Deuteronomy.

Many times, it goes something like this: “If you follow God’s commands, then God will

bless you and make you great.”

Here though, God shifts his promise from If/then, to when/nevertheless. God’s love is now upon David. When he fails, nevertheless God will love him. God promises to be with David’s line forever. He will be with them in chastisement and punishment, and he will be with them in their victories and reward.

God’s love does not come because David is great. David’s House will not have to earn God’s love. It is steadfast and endures forever. God’s love comes because God is great. God’s love does not come to us because we are great, but because that is the nature of God’s promise to David. That is the same promise that Jesus opened to us all. Jesus, God’s Christ (anointed), invites us into the same eternal love of steadfast promise.

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