

GOD SAYS “NO” AND THAT’S GOOD**2 Samuel 7****(Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17)**

Intro: Kathy and I were walking into Buehler's one evening a year or two ago and coming out of the store and walking toward us was a young man with a big bundle of roses. I wanted to ask him what he had done that he needed to take a couple dozen beautiful roses home with him. But instead, I simply asked, “Anniversary?”

The young man's answer was very short, but very, very long on sweetness and sincerity. His simple response was, "No. It's just because I love her."

My faith in humanity was renewed at that point. I will not soon forget that young man who was dazzled with a love that made him do things for his wife, just because he loves her and I pray their years together will long and sweet.

Sometimes you just want to do the best thing possible. You see a diamond ring and you want to buy it for her. You want to provide the trip for your mom and dad that they never had the money to do. You want to provide a gift for the congregation that has stuck by you through thick and thin. Sometimes you just want to do the best thing possible.

That's what David was doing here. His military campaigns were mostly a thing of the past – or at least on hold. His kingdom was established and stable and everything was good. He finally had some time to think and his thoughts turned to the Ark that he had brought home, so painfully AND joyfully from Abinadab's house. He pondered the fact that he lived in a fragrant and well-constructed palace made of the cedars of Lebanon. And then he considered that the presence of God, which is what the Ark represented, was in a tent like some wandering Bedouin. God had done so much for him and for Israel and he wanted to give something back. He wanted to make a permanent dwelling for the Lord.

He told this to Nathan the prophet. This is the first time, in the chronology of David that Nathan's name appears. He is God's faithful servant, and he is the one who ministers to King David as a holy advisor. We know that he's bold. We saw that in what Dr. Vore shared last month when he covered the account of David and Bathsheba (which actually, is chronologically after this account). Nathan was in tune with the Holy Spirit and he confidently told David he should *go do all that is in your heart for the Lord is with you* (v 3).

But as you know from what I just read, that God had other plans and Nathan had to go back and rescind his directive. In other words . . .

Sometimes Prophets get it wrong

- Nathan gave the wrong message. Sometimes prophets do that. That's because they are human and in this case Nathan misunderstood God's will. I mean it was a great idea on David's part – what could possibly be wrong with it? Nathan cannot be faulted for giving the go-ahead to David, right? Well, yes and no. Yes, it seemed to be a really harmless and honorable plan, but sometimes plans are good and they're just not right. This was case and Nathan should have been less hasty with his answer. As the spiritual advisor to the king and as a man of God he should have consulted God first. It's easier that way – it's never easy to have to go back and clean up a mess.
- Preachers are fallible. I know it comes as a surprise to you but I'm only human. I do make mistakes – just ask Kathy and my family – and actually I've been your pastor for almost twenty years so you know I'm pretty imperfect. But I am very aware that as a minister of the Gospel and your pastor, that I am, and should be, held to a higher standard. James writes, *Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways.* James 3:1-2a (ESV). Once when Jesus had a child with him he made it a teachable moment and said, . . . *whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.* Matthew 18:6. That message is to any Christ Follower about our responsibility to others, but it's especially meaningful to a preacher who wields the power of the pulpit. A preacher who abuses his/her pulpit for his own agenda is in very dangerous territory. A pastor, just like the prophet Nathan, needs to be in tune to the Holy Spirit to make sure they know the perfect will of God.
- Nevertheless, David's gift WAS noble because we should . . .

Always give the best to God

- And that's what David had in mind. He wanted to do more than God commanded. His plan only had the best intentions. "How is it that I live in splendor and God lives in a tent? I'm king, I can make this happen. God deserves the best!"
- God does deserve our best. The old song says,
*Give of your best to the Master;
 Give Him first place in your heart;
 Give Him first place in your service;
 Consecrate every part.
 Give, and to you will be given;
 God His beloved Son gave;
 Gratefully seeking to serve Him,
 Give Him the best that you have.*
 And that is the way it should be. But God says . . . *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.* Isaiah 55:8. God's plans are perfect. God was blessed by David's gift and then he said, Thanks but no thanks.
- And here's the point. . .

God doesn't need a house

- He lives in his people wherever they are -- God's true dwelling place is . . . US!
- When you need a worshipful place to pray or seek God in some way, coming and praying here in this room is was really good spot. But you can find God anywhere. He's not contained by a building. As a Christ Follower you have his presence in God the Holy Spirit.
- So it was for David. The Ark symbolized God's presence, but he didn't live there. No matter how hard people try, you can't keep God in a box.
- God's plans did include a beautiful and carefully constructed temple but it would be built by David's offspring – Solomon to be exact. God's plans were better and his answer "No" were just a pathway to something better. He was moved by David's desire to bless him with a home – but a man of peace would be the one who built it. Listen,
Then he called for Solomon his son and charged him to build a house for the Lord, the God of Israel. David said to Solomon, "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the Lord my God. 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. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. I He shall build a house for my name. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever.' 1 Chronicles 22:6-10
- The writer of Proverbs, most likely Solomon himself was using first-hand experience when he wrote, *Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.* Proverbs 19:21. And the purpose of the Lord WILL stand, whether his answer is yes, no, or wait. It's a no brainer, but even his faithful people need to be reminded that he always does the best thing and he does all things well.
- In David's case, God saw David's house and raise him a house. He promised a house that would have a king on the throne of his people forever. David's kingdom that would survive the generations and eventually produce the Savior of all humanity – not just Israel. It was a deal no one could refuse.
- David didn't and his attitude was . . .

When God says no, praise him anyway

- It's better anyway. Listen as I read the rest of the chapter. (Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29)
- This passage deserves an entire sermon in itself but let me briefly cover it.
- David is effusive. He realized when he thought he'd given his best and it had been bested. In fact as we reflect on his sweet prayer we realize, despite his obvious flaws and humanness, why he could be considered a man after God's own heart.

- David acknowledges God's greatness and perfection. Then he owns his and his nation's (in reality, all humanity's) fallenness and the joy he has in knowing God has a plan for his struggling creation despite that. He expresses this amazement in other places such as Psalm 8 when he gushes, . . . *what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?* Psalm 8:4.
- David doesn't get mad or sad at God's "No" because he knows that what God has is better. His response is "You go God! Your plan is perfect! Now, how can I help?"

Conclusion: God's no is not a reason to stop the preparations that you can do. A bit ago I read from 1 Chronicles 22. As you read the verses leading up to that passage you will see that David made preparation for the building of the temple even though he knew that it would not be his project, but that of his son. Instead of sulking he secured skilled builders and workers and materiel for the *exceedingly magnificent* (1 Chronicles 22:5) *house of the Lord* he envisioned. David didn't get mad at God's "No", instead he praised God and then got busy.

Let's learn from David. Let's grow from God's answers to our prayers. Let's praise him when he says yes. Let's praise him when he says no. Let's praise him when he says wait. God's answers are always good – even when it doesn't seem like it in the midst of our struggles. Let's just have faith in knowing that sometimes God says "No." and that's still good. Because he's always good. Amen.