

## (1-28-24) Rebellion Meets Mercy

### 2 Samuel 7:1-17.

**Big Idea of the Message:** God's eternal plan is revealed in his covenant with David.

How many like to hear no?

I read some articles the last few weeks about saying and hearing no. The funny thing I found was that overwhelmingly people want to say no more, but also want to hear no less. Does that highlight mankind's greatest problem, our sinfulness?

How do children respond to no? Teenagers? Adults?

Another interesting thing I found as I read is many of the articles, I read that people in society need to hear no and hear it more often. The article went on about how to say no and make it more palatable. My pastor loved the cookie approach, say something positive, sandwich in the negative, finished with a positive.

We really don't want to hear no from God.

In the book *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship* the author says something very striking. *"God gives us a gift of limits."* The author goes on to say, *"I could not do anything I wanted. Yes, I had gifts and potential, but I also had significant limits. And instead of seeing those limits as God's gift, I considered them obstacles to power and control."*

God has the right, and doesn't struggle with telling us no. And some of the things He tells us "No" about can seem very unfair and even not right in our eyes, or opinion. But He is God, He knows best, and we must figure out how to respond to His answer. Or how to get over it.

### **But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. Psalm 115:3**

It is so important that we learn to trust God and thank Him when He says "yes" and when He says "no."

One of the most powerful examples of this is found in the life of David at the height of his ministry. He was the King of Israel, God was blessing him, he had the finances, the laborer's, an entire nation behind him. David wanted to build God a temple (a church), so that all nations might know the God of Israel. And it would house the Ark of the Covenant. Slam dunk! Right? Well let's see.

#### **I. How will/do you respond when God says No?**

- **Read 2 Samuel 7:1-5.**
- **Read 1 Chronicles 17:3-4. "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in."**
- Can you imagine being Nathan? 'Umm, King David, sir.... A funny thing happened. When I said, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you." Well, umm, God came to me last night and told me to tell you that you can't build a temple for Him.'
- Building a temple for the Lord was a great idea, a great plan, but it wasn't God's plan.
- This portion of scripture is a warning to all of us. We must be careful that we don't presume to know God's heart and will in everything. I am guilty of thinking I know exactly what God's will is for me, you, and the whole community.

**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! Romans 11:33**

- There is a sense in which we can never fully understand the heart of God – because he is God and not a human being. But the Bible is also clear that when we seek out God, when we focus our attention in delighting in Him, that God chooses to reveal Himself to us, at least in part. As we saw last week, the desire to delight completely in God may very well be the attribute that most made David a man after God’s own heart.
- God has set limits/boundaries for each of us, and we must decide how we will respond when He gives us the gift of limits, the gift of no.
- God’s gift of limits offers us many gifts. They protect us, so we don’t hurt ourselves, others, or God’s work. They keep us grounded and humble, reminding us we are not in charge of running the world. They break our self-will. They are God’s means to give us, and our ministries, direction- IF we listen. They are one of the primary ways we grow in wisdom. And perhaps most importantly, limits are places we encounter God in ways that would otherwise be impossible.
- We need to be reminded that every success is a gift from God, every limit is a gift from God and every no is a gift from God and unless God chooses to reveal it, I won’t fully know His heart.
- How will you respond knowing that?

**II. God is more interested in building our house.**

- **Read 2 Samuel 6-17.**
- God must build my house before I can build His house.
- David comes to God, offering to build God a house, but God isn’t interested in what David can do for Him. He’s much more interested in what He wants to do for David. He basically says to David, “David, I don’t need a house. I never asked for one; it was never my idea for you or anyone else to build one. David, by now, you ought to know me well enough to know I can’t be put in a box...or a building. But David, I love you so much that I’m going to build a house for you – not just some temporary structure, but an eternal house that will never pass away. And from your house will I bring forth the Messiah, the Savior of the world.”
- This passage is what is known by theologians as the “Davidic Covenant.” Covenant is just a fancy word for promise. The Bible is full of covenants, or promises, that God made with his people:
- The Adamic covenant in **Genesis 3**, where God promised that one day Adam’s offspring would overcome the Evil One.
- The Noahic covenant where God promised to never again completely flood the earth.
- The Abrahamic covenant where God promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars and that through him all the people of the earth would be blessed.
- The Mosaic covenant where God promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.
- God promises David that He will build a house for David and that David’s house and his throne will endure forever. God also promises that one day David’s offspring will succeed David and that he will be the one to build a house for God. That promise is fulfilled when David’s son Solomon builds the temple. Ultimately God’s covenant with David will be fulfilled when Jesus, who the Bible clearly shows to be the offspring of David, returns to this earth and reigns forever.
- So, in the midst of God’s no He still blesses and encourages David.

- If you have read the rest of David's life you will see why God wanted to focus on building David's house. David ruled Israel well but when it came to the affairs in his own home, he made some huge blunders. HUGE!!

### III. How David responded to God's limits/boundaries/no is an example to us.

- **Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29.**
- **"Who am I, O Lord God?"**
- So just like a little boy, David sat down before the Lord and said, in effect, "Dad, what is David that You've blessed his house and his life and have brought him from leading a little flock of sheep to giving him this magnificent throne? Who am I?"
- I think it is important that every once in a while, we sit down, take a long look at our short lives, and just count our blessings.
- Who are we to have been protected from the disasters that have hit so many others?
- Who are we that we have a house to keep us warm in the winter and cool in the summer when so many don't have homes?
- Who am I, Lord, that You should give me health and strength to be able to hold a job or pursue a career?
- Who am I, Lord to have parents who loved and encouraged me?
- Who am I to have been blessed with such a great spouse?
- Who am I, Lord to have these kids and to see them grow? Who am I?
- "Dream or no dream," says king David, "I'm a blessed person." And so are we. Amen!
- What if, when we are told no, or when things don't seem to be going our way, what if we paused and recited back **2 Samuel 7:18-29**?
- What a grateful man was David. No wonder he is labeled a man after God's own heart.
- When God said "no," he didn't throw a temper tantrum, he just stepped back and thanked the Lord for being the God He was and is and thanked Him for doing the things He had done, and for doing the things He was going to do.
- God did reveal to David why he said no to David some years later.
- **Read 1 Chronicles 22:7-8; 2 Chronicles 6:7-9.**
- David knew that God had said "no" to him, but "yes" to Solomon, so David was bound and determined to do all he could to help his son complete the task. **(1 Chron. 22:2-5)**
- Do we throw our support behind the one who gets the position and privilege that we wanted?
- That is a very hard thing to do – another piece of evidence why David was a man after God's own heart.

### Conclusion

So, what lessons would God have us learn from today's story? Again, there are many lessons we could learn, but let us focus on just one.

First and foremost, we must learn the lesson that God is Supreme – He is the Lord.

And as the Sovereign Lord, God knows what is best and does what is best.

Our job is to trust and obey. Our job is to humbly submit ourselves to God and cooperate with Him.

When God says “no” to our prayers and our dreams, we must trust that He has a better plan, and we must patiently support it.

Please understand that I’m not saying that any of this is easy.

God does answer all prayers; He answers “yes”, “no” or “wait.”

If you are like me, then you are most fond of “yes”, less fond of “wait”, and you find the “no” answer to be the hardest of all.

When God says “no” it could be for several reasons.

1. He might say “no” because the idea is not right.
2. He might say “no” because the timing is not right.
3. He might say “no” because we are not right.

Part of the process of maturing in our faith is the ability to trust and thank God regardless of His answers.

Let us learn to be like David who when God said “no” gave thanks to the Lord anyhow.