

The Wow Factor
Series: David ~ Faith We Can Relate To
2 Samuel 7
August 22, 2010

We are going to look today at what many scholars say is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. Not just in the OT. In the whole Bible. Wow. That oughta make us sit up and take notice. So open your Bibles to 2 Samuel, chapter 7. This immediately follows what we looked at last week in our series on the life of David. [Now remember, when I say open your Bibles...]

Before we get to the text, let me say this: I try to make my sermons pretty tight. By that I mean that I try to focus on ONE idea, ONE main thought, make ONE primary point, so that we can really apply the text before us in some concrete way to our lives. That's very important to me. The Bible is not just for *information* in our heads but for *transformation* of our lives. I don't just want us to learn something about God, about the Bible, when we gather and hear the Word of God on Sunday mornings, I want us all to leave desiring to *do something differently* as a result of what we've heard. To know what our next steps are in following Jesus.

Here's the trouble this morning, and I felt this way last week too: There's just so much stuff in this chapter, and it's all good, I found it hard to focus on just ONE thing. So as you listen today, it may be that you feel like some of the things I say don't apply to you. Maybe they're for somebody else here today. But I do pray that there will be at least ONE thing that God reveals to you through His Word today that will strike you, that you will be able to apply to your life in some concrete way. Some next step you'll want to take. Maybe you'll want to write that down somewhere. So here we go...

2 Samuel 7:1-3. Everything has settled down for David. He is no longer on the run from King Saul. No more nasty Philistines or Amalakites warring against him. He is King over all of Israel now, as we saw last week. So David can just enjoy the privileges of being king. Let the good times roll! I picture David strolling around the palace in Jerusalem, walking through the gardens and the grounds, just enjoying all that God has given him. He has all the time in the world to check his Facebook page. All the time in the world to reflect on all that God has done for him. And he gets an idea. A good idea, maybe even a *great* idea. He calls in the palace prophet, Nathan, and he says, "You know, Nathan, I have this great palace here while God is stashed outside in a tent."

Now remember, the ark of God was thought to be the very place of God's presence. God had commanded that the ark be housed in a portable structure like a tent, surrounded by curtains. But David has a little building project in mind. He will build God something more permanent, something more befitting Yahweh God, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He will build God the King a palace of His own. And David's advisor, Palace Prophet Nathan, tells him to go ahead. David's idea must be a good idea because God is with him. God has always been with David.

vv. 4-9a. In other words, everything that David has accomplished, God has done. God's Word spoken through Nathan reminds David of how He has blessed him in the past. Yahweh rejects

David's plan to build a temple, but He does not reject David. God has something even greater in store for David.

Listen to what God promises David [vv. 9b-16.] "My love will *never* be taken away from your family," God promises David. "The dynasty of David will endure FOREVER." Forever. Wow. Quite a promise.

V. 17: Now I wonder if Nathan was just a bit reluctant to come back to David with this information God had dropped on him in middle of the night. I wonder if he was a bit afraid to say to David, "Not so fast, King. *This* is what the Lord says." David planned one thing. And it was a good idea. It came from a good heart, from good intentions. But God said, "No." It was a good idea but not a God idea. Not every good idea we have is a God idea.

So what do you do when you have what you think is a good idea, maybe even God's idea for you, but God says, "no"? There are a couple of ways we respond when that happens. Sometimes, when God says "no" to our plans, we just go on asking God, begging God, to give us what we want, to let us do what we have planned. Like a little child who, when told "No, you can't go over to Billy's house," just keeps asking and asking and begging and begging. I think we're like that with God sometimes. "Please, please, please..." Or sometimes, when God doesn't give us what we want, we just grumble and complain and even whine to God. We just go on explaining to God why we should get what we're asking for, why He should allow us to do what we think is a good idea. "Why not? Why not? Why not?" And sometimes, we just ignore what God tells us and go ahead and do what we want anyway.

And the danger is that when we continue to focus on ourselves and what we want, what we want to do, the good idea we've had, we often miss the amazing promise that God offers to us instead. The amazing alternative to our plans that God offers. When we get stuck thinking about our good idea, we miss the God idea. God has promised David that his dynasty will go on forever and that God will never remove His love from David's son. David doesn't get to build a "house" for God. But God is going to build a "house" for him. And the stunning thing about God's promise is that it's a house built on unconditional, everlasting love.

Look at verses 15 and 16 again: "My love will never be taken away from him... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever... your throne will be established forever." Wow. This is the first time in the Bible that God makes His promise of love for His people unconditional. Just one example of many: Exodus 19:5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Until now, God's commitment was: 'If you obey me fully and keep my covenant,' but now God says, "My love will never be taken away." There will be punishment for disobedience – every good and loving father disciplines his children – but the punishment will not be terminal. When they do wrong, God will not abandon them or disown them. God promises here for the first time to love His people unconditionally. God commits Himself unconditionally to His people through David. Wow.

Now, if David had been focused only on his plan to build God a temple, he would have missed God's amazing promise of a forever-dynasty and unconditional love. When our hearts and hands are full of our own dreams and plans, God cannot "wow" us with His dreams and plans for us –

which are always bigger and better than ours, bigger and better than anything we can even imagine. God's plans for you may be different than yours, but they're never wrong.

But rather than begging God, "Please, please, please let me build you a temple, God," OR complaining to God, "Why not? Why not? Why not, God?" OR just calling up the contractors and drawing up the plans, David prays. Vv. 18. David goes to church, so to speak. He goes into the tabernacle, the tent that houses the ark, the place of God's presence, and he sits before the Lord. He sits down in front of the ark. The traditional posture for prayer was standing or kneeling. But David sits. And he prays. And he begins with what I'll call 'the WOW factor':

Vv. 19. Can you hear the 'Wow' in David's prayer? "Wow, God! Look at what you've done for me and my family.

Vv. 20-24. We can learn a lot by listening to David pray. One thing that strikes me is this: Maybe we need to stop doing so much – both for God and for ourselves – and just sit down. Sit before God and consider God – who He is, what He's done, and what He's promised. I hope that is something you experience every Sunday morning when you come here for worship. I did lots of sitting with God during my sabbatical. I had the time. And you may be thinking you don't. It's one of the reasons that the practice of Sabbath is so important. Taking one 24 hour period every week to stop and reflect on life. We'll be hearing more about that this fall.

Another thing that I want you to notice is that David begins his prayer with thanksgiving and praise. He begins with God. He begins with the 'wow factor' of who God is and the awesomeness of what He's done and what He's promised to do. David refers to God by name 17 times in his prayer. And he uses the personal pronoun for God an additional 45 times. One of the names David uses for God is 'Sovereign.' The Hebrew word means Lord, master, even owner. David acknowledges that God is his lord and master. And He calls God 'Almighty.' Lord of Hosts, God-of-the-Angel-Armies, commanding all the powers of the universe. David's prayer is focused first on God: who He is, what He's done, what He's promised. But David moves from praise and thanksgiving into bold insistence, almost.

Vv. 25-29. He both humbles himself before God AND boldly asks God to keep His amazing promises. This is David's faith, and should be ours, as well: a combination of submitting ourselves to God, recognizing God for who He is and how awesome He is, AND knowing that we can boldly enter the throne room of our Daddy King and insist He keep His promises to us.

Our LIFE Group study on the Lord's Prayer. "Ask, seek, knock." Hebrews 4:16: "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Let that image and thought sink in for a moment. "The throne of grace." God is our King, but also our Father. God promises to relate to David's family as a father to a beloved son. And so David is bold to ask God to bless him. To keep His promises.

David only wanted to build God a temple. And God surprised David with blessings he could not imagine, and really, could not have fully understood. There is more to God's promises here than just a promise of the succession of kings from the house and line of David to sit on the throne in Israel. The house and line of David leads eventually to another king, to Jesus, the King of kings

and Lord of lords. And He *will* reign forever and ever. Wow. It is through Jesus that we come to know personally this God who promises to love us forever. Wow. It is through Jesus that God blesses us and redeems us and makes us His people – more than that – His children. Wow.

What God had planned was grander and more majestic than anything David could have thought. It was far beyond anything David could have imagined.

Eph. 3:20. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, the apostle Paul writes that God, who shows us His love most powerfully in the cross of Jesus, that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. Wow. God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, far above all you could ever ask or think or imagine to pray for. Wow.

So the next time you pray, before you ask God to bless you or help you or do something for you, start, as David did, with God. Start with who He is and what He's done for you. Remember that God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, far above all you could ask, imagine or think. And let Him 'wow' you with His promises.