

Theme: **God's Will and my Dreams**

Text: 2 Samuel 7:4 – 29

Season: 3rd Wednesday Lenten Service

Date: February 28, 2018

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

*[Nathan enters. He takes his job as prophet seriously. His love both for God and the king are evident.]*

Grace and peace be with you as you let God's will be done in your life.

Have you ever had to tell your boss that you were wrong? Have you ever had to tell your boss that he was wrong? Have you ever had to tell the most powerful man in the world that his dreams for the future are completely off base? [Pause] Well I hoped that I never would have to do those things, but then it happened.

At that moment, all the pride and wrath of a powerful monarch rested on King David's brow like a crown. I actually thought I might die. Then in the next moment I could see the transformation taking place ...

But I am getting ahead of myself. My name is Nathan and I am a prophet of the Most High God. You probably know that my name, Nathan, means gift; and you can probably imagine that my job sometimes isn't: a gift. I mean, sometimes, when you speak for God, you have to voice the truth even when you are wrong, even when you don't know what will happen next.

And I had been wrong; though I'm not sure it was entirely my fault. It happened like this ... King David had finally ascended to the throne of a united kingdom of Israel. He conquered Jerusalem and set up his capital city there. Then we brought the Tabernacle of God up to Jerusalem. The Tabernacle had housed the Ark of the Covenant ever since the days of Moses. So Yahweh's tent was pitched in the shadow of the palace of King David.

You should have seen King David dance before the Ark! Some thought the king made a fool of himself as we marched up the hill of the city and the crowd cheered; but the reckless abandonment of King David's dance, and the clear voice of his song showed that our monarch owed allegiance to a greater King, the Most High God.

I didn't know David when he was just a shepherd boy, but it's easy to imagine him singing to his sheep in the hills of Bethlehem. The whole flock must have been treated to quite a few private praise concerts out there! David had a beautiful voice. And he danced with the grace of a seasoned warrior.

So the Ark of God was camped out in a crude shelter while David enjoyed his palace. I think that bothered the king more than he let on. David knew what it was like to sleep in an army tent, or a secret cave, or even out in the open air. And now, with his power consolidated

and his crown secure, it seemed somewhat improper to have the Almighty God camped out in a tent that David could see through his cedar plank windows.

So the king David called in the prophet of God, that's me. It's always a good idea when making big plans to check it out with God first. King David told me about his dream for a temple for the Ark of the Covenant, for the Mercy Seat where the Presence of Yahweh could dwell with His people. If King David had a house of cedar, then so should God; our monarch knew that he owed allegiance to a greater King, the Most High God.

So I told King David what prophets are supposed to tell kings; I honestly couldn't have known it was the wrong thing to say then. King David was anointed with the Holy Spirit. He was a man after Yahweh's own heart. King David knew he owed his reign as King to the God he called King. And now, God's chosen, anointed leader wanted to build a house for God's presence. Of course I told him, "Do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you!" You would have told him the same thing! That's what the great prophet Samuel told King Saul right after He had anointed Him to be king over the people of Israel, "Once the Holy Spirit has come upon you from on high, do what your hand finds to do; God is with you." Saul's hand went back to the plow after that, until the Philistines attacked and he took up the mantle of leadership ... but that's a different story of a different king.

So I'm not so sure it was entirely all my fault, but... I was wrong in telling King David those words. Without a clear word to the contrary though, someone who is anointed with the Holy Spirit is supposed to do what's in front of them, do what their hand finds to do. "So was there a clear word to the contrary?" I would say yes! Yahweh himself showed up to give David "a clear word to the contrary!" Well actually, God's Word came to me first. And I had to take it to David... *[pause]* Did I mention my job isn't always a gift?

I was sent to tell King David: "This is what the Lord Almighty says, "You want to build for me a house? No, no, no, David; I am going to build for you a house. Your son can build my house, the temple, but I will build your house, a dynasty that will last for eternity. A Son of David will one day sit on an eternal throne; and I will be to him a Father, and he will be my own, beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. And when that Son of David ascends to his throne, his reign will have no end."

So I was sent to tell King David that his dream for the future was all wrong. At least that's what it felt like I was going to be doing at the time... I guess I was actually sent to tell David that his dream for the future was—not all wrong—but too small. David wasn't going to get what he

wanted; but what God wanted to give to him was so much more than what King David had dreamed.

Still ... it's never easy to tell the king he can't have what he wants. I mean, other kings from other nations have been known to kill the messenger that tells them they can't have what they want. While David is a man after Yahweh's own heart, he is also a man of war. I always thought General Joab was behind some of the more bloody politics, but David himself could be pretty brutal. There was the man who brought the news of King Saul's death. He was executed for treason, and David himself gave the order. *[Pause]* Of course, the man had gloated over the death of the king ... but being a bearer of bad news isn't always good for your health. Especially when it's the ruler of your world and he doesn't like your message.

So I decided not to gloat. *[swallows]* And to make sure Joab was away on business. Then I went in to the king, he was in high spirits. He was already making plans to establish God's dwelling permanently in the capital. I had to get his attention away from royal architects, stone masons, and carpenters in order to tell him the construction project would have to be put on hold. As I told King David he had to let go of his own dream for the future, his face-hardened and his eyes grew dark. He dismissed the builders coldly and then looked at me.

I tried to tell the King that the whatever-your-hand-finds-to-do stuff was a general principle, and it wasn't my fault, and that all rules have exceptions, but he didn't look like he liked what he was hearing, nor was He buying it. All he heard was me telling him no. For a moment, all the pride and wrath of a powerful monarch rested on King David's brow like a crown. I actually thought that I might die. So I gave up trying to make myself look good, and just delivered the message entrusted to me. I spoke the Words of the Lord instead of my excuses and I could actually see the transformation take place.

As I spoke God's Words about King David's future, I could see the proud king melt away and the shepherd boy return. David let go of his own dream for God's future, in order to embrace God's dream for his future. When I finished the message, the king grabbed me by the elbow, marched me out of the palace, and took me right into the Tabernacle of Yahweh. There were no cedar beams or marble pillars, but David hadn't come to study architecture.

He sat down to pray and King David can really pray! He poured his words out to God the same way he had danced before the Ark, with total abandonment. I wept openly as I heard King David, who knew both his place and his God as he said: "Who am I, O Lord God, that you would make such promises to me?" The simple shepherd boy was back—David was always a better

king when he was a shepherd first—and the shepherd boy knew how much he depended on his true King, the Almighty God, for everything he had.

David latched onto the promise of a royal heir, a Son of David, to sit on an eternal throne, a ruler whom God claimed as His beloved Son; David heard the promise, and received the promise, and let go of all his own dreams in order to hold on to that promise.

I left him there still worshipping, still praising God's will and purpose, still overcome with gratitude for a promise beyond his worthiness. And I went away with a deeper sense of God's will being done in his heart and for us.

What kind of God puts his own comfort aside to make promises to his people? What kind of divine being will commits to individuals with a sketchy past and an unreliable future? What kind of God replaces our small dreams for the future with His grand dreams for us?

I had to tell King David his plans were being overruled by God's plans; and David received it as a gift. So it turns out I was wrong, and King David was wrong, too. Neither of us could have guessed the gracious promise God had in mind for all of us. And while it all turned out better than I could have expected, I still had to go in and tell the king he was wrong. Man, I hope I never have to do that again ... !

Before I leave, I would like me pray for you the prayer that King David prayed on that day in the Tabernacle, for it really is our prayer for God's Will be done in our lives. Let us pray.

**"Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord GOD. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD! And what more can I say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord GOD! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears.**

**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. 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." Amen.**