

2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

David is king. The former King Saul is dead, he was killed in battle. David had captured Jerusalem and has made it the new capital. Not only has he captured Jerusalem, but he built himself a palace as we heard, a palace made of cedar. Now the palace also acts as the head of the place of government for the whole nation, the nation of Judah and Israel (remember there's two names for two different areas, but it's one big kingdom). Now just because the King lives in the palace doesn't mean that's the ONLY thing that happens there at the palace. It's like our White House, the president and his family live in the White House, but a lot of the national business also happens at the White House.

David's attempting to establish his reign there in Jerusalem. We heard last week how he brought the Ark of the Covenant from where it was in protective custody, so to speak. Now it's there in the new capital. So David is looking for something to do and he decides that it's time to build a permanent place of worship to the Lord God Almighty. They DO have the tabernacle; they've had the tabernacle ever since they left Egypt back with Moses. Out there in the wilderness – you can read all about how God tells them how to build the tabernacle in Exodus 25. Now remember that the tabernacle is portable. Why? Because the people built it when they were on the exodus. They need to pick it up and take it along with them where ever they go. It's like a really big tent. It's moveable; it goes with the people. The tabernacle was with them when they were out there in the wilderness. It was with them as they stormed into and took the Promised Land, it was with them for the decades of the rule of the Judges. It remained as the tabernacle throughout the reign of Saul. It's been with them for a couple of centuries.

So what is David thinking that he needs to build a prominent edifice for the Lord God? David is striving to serve God; he wants to know God's will. So he starts off the right way, he consults the prophet Nathan. You might have remembered the Prophet Samuel was the one who originally anointed David, but Samuel died. There's actually a really cool story back in 1 Samuel 28, when King Saul is about to go into battle with David and he consults a median and raises the ghost of Samuel, it's a really kind of cool story, but I am not going to talk about that now. Nathan gives David the go ahead. 'Yes, yes, go ahead; build the Lord God Almighty a temple.' But, Nathan doesn't get the Lord God Almighty's approval before he gives David the okay, so God kind of dope slaps Nathan up alongside the head. 'No, building the tabernacle is a no-go here. However,' says the Lord God to David, 'YOU, David will not build ME a house. "I" will build YOU a house.' Now in Hebrew there's this really cool play on words going on. The one word that can be translated as house, or dynasty, or temple, and so we keep hearing it, mainly as house, throughout our reading tonight. But there is really fun word play going on. At the meeting when God said you will not build me a house, God means that David's offspring, David's descendants will be a mighty house. They will become a great people for the Lord God Almighty. Not a bad deal, really.

I find it interesting that David really WANTED to do something pleasing for the Lord God. Not just to win brownie points, but he wanted to do something that would make the Lord God happy. And he gets told: No. He sought out God's will and when he asked Nathan, even though the initial answer was "got for it", the True answer from God was: Nope. That's one of those annoying things I find about belief.

Wouldn't our lives just be so much simpler if God would fax us an answer, or twitter, or face book, or phone, or drop me a text, or an email, or even snail mail? Something other than the way God normally answers me, which is . . . well how *does* God answer us? God answers us in prayer, but it's usually not a strong audible answer. God answers us when we read scripture, but we have to interpret what we are reading. God answers us when we talk with one another about what's going on in our lives about our questions of faith. Even though I want God to give me that big neon sign, God does NOT work that way. In large part I believe because God GAVE US BRAINS. Becky Enney, who does the children's message at the 10:45 service, said to me once, that she enjoys being a Christian in a Lutheran tradition because Lutherans don't have to leave our brains in the narthex. I know that Pastor Hardy and Pastor Easter and even I strive to give sermons that will make people Think. I'm not concerned whether or not you Agree with me; I want you to think about What you Believe, and Why you Believe it, and what difference that belief is making in your life.

There is a great image though that I get from this passage, that has to do with the tabernacle. In John's gospel, which we didn't hear tonight, in John's gospel, 1:14, it's a wonderful verse "and the Word became flesh, and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." As you read the first chapter of John's gospel, you realize that when they talk about the word, they're really talking about Jesus. But the word that is translated in verse 14 there, the word that's translated as "lived"- es-ka-no-sen - is more literally translated as "to set up a tent." Or, as we could say 'to tabernacle.' "And the word became flesh and **tabernacled** among us."

I think one of the reasons that the Lord God said NO to David is that, with the tabernacle, the people got a better idea that God goes with them where ever they are. If they pick up and move, so does the tabernacle. So does the Lord God. It's the same in our lives, too. God doesn't stay here in this place of brick and mortar and glass and steel. Rather, God goes where we go. God picks up and tabernacles right along with us. God didn't want to be seen by the people as only being in one place. Now the temple *will* be built. Solomon will ascend the throne, and he will build an incredible edifice to the Lord God. Yet, we are called to remember that where ever we go, whenever we are, God is tabernacling with us, always.

Amen.

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