

Pastor Stephen Lorange
David: The Covenant

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Series: David
2 Samuel 7:1-17

**BIG IDEA - WE SEE THROUGH DAVID HOW GOD KEEPS HIS
COVENANT BY PROVIDING A SON - JESUS**

Good morning, Two Cities Church. I'm so glad to have each and every one of you with us. We see you out in the lobby. So glad to have you in this room or if you're joining with us online. My name is Stephen Lorange. I'm one of the pastors here. Specifically, I'm the pastor of leadership development. That might mean a lot of things, but it primarily means I oversee our residency program.

You may not know this. You may be coming around for the first time or have been here a while and still don't know. That's fine. Our church here at Two Cities has a two-year development program for people who would like to give their lives to ministry in the church. It's not about me (it's really not), but in some ways, my story kind of filters through what we're trying to do.

When I was growing up in church, I was asking questions. I was asking questions about the Bible. I was asking even big questions, theology-type questions, and pretty much, what some people told me was, "These are great questions. You need to go to seminary." If you're not initiated, that's fine. Seminary is like Bible school. "Those are great questions. Why don't you go to a Bible school, and they'll answer those there." I was like, "Cool."

So, I went to Bible school, and I was getting all of those answers, and whatever else, but I was asking, "What does this mean for the church? How does this work out in life and ministry?" In Bible school they were like, "Great questions. Once you graduate, you can get a job in the church, and then they can give you the answers there." I'm like, "Okay." So, I graduated and got a job in the church and tried to figure things out.

Really, our heart in our residency program, if you put it this way... My personal calling is to kind of bring those two worlds together. That's what we're trying to do in our two-year development program. People come to us. They may know exactly what they want to do or they may say, "You know what? I feel like the Lord wants me to give my life to his service."

We say, "Great. We're going to provide you high-level biblical and theological formation." We offer a master's degree within our program at our church. That's a pretty cool thing. We say, "Not only that. We're going to give you meaningful ministry leadership experience." Our residents aren't getting our coffees and taking our messages or whatever else. They're doing it. Maybe you or your family are part of the ministry of our church, and you see our residents having meaningful leadership experience.

Then, finally, we have character formation discipleship. Yes, I'm a pastor of this church here, and I do things like I preach sometimes. I do things like I marry and bury, but do you know what I really focus my time on? My people. My people are the residents. I try to give my life to them, and I try to get in their lives, underneath the hood. "How has God created you? Who has he called you to be? How is he using your unique gifts for his service?"

So, if you know anyone who you think that would be a good fit for... Maybe that's you. Just reach out to me. Say, "I'm interested. I want to know more." I'd love to talk to you more. Or maybe, if you're here, you say, "You know what? I'm not personally interested. You know, who I am, what I'm doing..." That's fine. "But I'd love to be invested somehow in what's going on." Great. Reach out to me. I'd love to find a way to get you invested.

Finally, I thought wouldn't it be fun if all of us together went through a residency development time this morning. You don't get a vote in it. That's what you're doing. We're going to take all of you together through a residency development time, namely through our passage here in 2 Samuel, chapter 7.

In a way, it fits well, because this passage is similar to what we've been doing through our *David* series, looking at key moments and milestones in David's life. Obviously, this is a key moment. Obviously, this is a milestone. But how this passage is different...

In some ways, it takes a big-picture view. It steps back out of David's life and looks at what the Lord has been doing from the beginning. It reaches all the way back to the garden and creation. It stretches all the way forward to eternity, because it really

encompasses or filters through our Lord Jesus himself. We see the big-picture promises of God in this passage.

Before I dive in, I wonder...*Why do we struggle to believe God's promises?* Maybe we don't really know his promises. I get it. Listen. The Bible is a big book. It's hard to get through. Maybe you've never made it through. Maybe you've tried or whatever else. That's fine, but maybe we could start walking through some of these things together today.

Or maybe, for you, if you're honest, you're kind of bored by this Christian thing. Sure, you're glad God created you, or whatever, and thankful he saved you from something and to something, but really, you have a job to do. Like, literally, you have a job to do, 40 hours a week, and you have a family that's running you ragged, and you have any number of things.

You're like, "Honestly, I don't really look forward to coming and hearing the same things over and over and over again. I'm kind of bored with all this stuff." Maybe today we'll see how this isn't boring in the way that the Lord's promises really reach deep down into your heart and work their way out through your life.

Finally, for some of us here, we struggle to believe God's promises because we don't trust his heart. Maybe something has happened to you or someone close to you. You're like, "You know what? If that's the way the world is, then I don't even want to trust a God who's connected with that." But as we'll see the Lord's faithfulness in this passage... The Lord is faithful to bring his promises to bear despite sin, despite suffering, and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

This may be a passage some of us aren't familiar with, and that's fine. Again, we are going to be walking through it together. I'm going to read the whole swath here, 2 Samuel, chapter 7. I'm going to read that whole section all the way, verses 1-17, and we're going to see today how God keeps his promises in Christ. So, let's read that passage.

"Now when the king..." That's David. Remember? The guy we've been talking about. *"...lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.' And Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.'*

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, 'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived

in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt..."" That's the exodus...Moses.

""...but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"

Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever." In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David."

Obviously, this is a key moment in David's life. We see that a lot of promises are made to him, but in a way, these aren't really what he expected. Big things had happened, and maybe he was expecting something he was going to do on behalf of God, but the Lord gave him such a moment and such a milestone that tied the rest of his life together.

In the first couple of verses, it's like we get a mini tour of our series. Verse 1: ***"Now when the king lived in his house..."*** David is the king. He's so much a king he has a palace. Do you know what that means? David is the anointed. The Lord has given him rest from his enemies the Bible reminds us. That means David's enemies, his foes, or whatever, have been vanquished, whether that's the big ol' boy Goliath or whether

that's that he has been fighting the "ites" or whether that's Saul or whoever else. David is the warrior.

"...the king said to Nathan..." The king is talking to his prophet. The prophet Samuel, whom the book is named after, is dead, but David still has a prophet he's getting together with. He's a friend. David says, **"See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent."** His desire may be misguided, but at least he's looking after the glory of the Lord. David is a worshiper.

A lot has happened in his life. You can imagine. He's sitting there looking back, thinking, "Well, maybe this is my time to do something for God." Guess what. This entire chapter isn't really about David at all. It's about who our God is, what he has done, what he is doing, and what he will do in Christ.

Look at verse 6. The Lord is like, "Hey, let me remind you, David. I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day." Isn't that great? He's reminding of the salvation. "I've saved those people, and I've been with them." The humility of our God, that he is wandering, if you will, in the tabernacle. His presence is wandering with his people as they wander.

In verse 8, he's like, "It's not just about all of those people. What about *you*, David?" He says, "David, remember, I'm the one who took you from nowhere and nothing, from shepherding little sheep out in the wilderness. I took you from that place and made you a king." Then he says, in verses 10-11, it's not just about what he has done for David; it's about what he's going to do for everybody. "And I will make a place for my people Israel." He's going to give them, finally, the peace, the rest, the home they've been looking for.

See? In some ways, we are seeing these big-picture promises of God come to pass, but the Bible uses a different word for *promise*. Maybe you see it there in the text of Scripture, if you have an open Bible in front of you, or even as you're flipping through or scrolling through. What's the subheading? What's the little title of this chapter? Do you see it? "God's covenant with David."

Covenant is an odd word. It's an old word, maybe one we don't really know anymore. Sometimes it helps to define things by comparing and contrasting. So, we can compare and contrast *covenant* with *contract*. I think we're pretty familiar with contracts. Think about your iTunes service agreement whenever you get a new update on your phone.

iTunes has made all of us liars. Nobody has read through all the stuff of that and agrees to all of the terms and conditions. We don't even know. We're frustrated we

have to click two extra times to get the new software on our phone. What's a contract? A contract is something you really don't think is that important. It's like, "Yeah, whatever. I'll sign up there to get the credit card. I'll sign up there to get the software," or whatever else.

A contract is not really important...until it is, until something happens and you try to get out, and you're like, "Oh man! So *that's* what was going on the whole time." A contract is where two individuals kind of turn their backs on each other and try to draw up something that protects their rights and what they're entitled to and whatever, whatever. It gives them what they want and punishes the other side if they ever break suit. That's a contract. It's individuals being selfish.

A covenant is supposed to be something better. A wooden definition of a covenant is two parties that come into a binding agreement with each other with a witness present. We see a covenant maybe most often in our lives at a wedding ceremony. If you've been to a wedding recently, what happens? Two parties, the bride and the groom, make a binding agreement with each other. You know, "For better or for worse, for richer or poorer, until death do us part."

They make a binding agreement with each other in the presence of many witnesses. Whenever I do a wedding ceremony, I have the couple turn around. It's kind of cool to see all of your friends and family, but it's also important. It's to remind them that they're making this agreement before both God and man. There are witnesses involved who can hold them accountable to the vows made.

So, in some ways, we are expecting covenant-type stuff when we get to 2 Samuel, chapter 7. It even reminds us of what has been before in the Bible. Do you remember the covenant God made with his people at Mount Sinai, the mountain after the exodus? "Let my people go." Moses gets them out of there and takes them to the mountain.

What happens at the mountain, at Mount Sinai? The Lord enters into a covenant with his people. He gives them the tablets of the covenant, the Ten Commandments, and then Moses and even the creation itself, the Old Testament tells us, is the witness to hold him accountable to that.

That covenant thing is serious. It's not something you can just break and go your own way. It's serious. It's almost as serious as Charlton Heston is in the old movie. Have y'all seen that old movie recently, *The Ten Commandments*? I hadn't, so I just looked up the trailer. That dude is serious. He has a furrowed brow the whole time. He has a stuck-on beard as Moses, and he comes down from the mountain.

There's this one scene in the old trailer. He goes, "If you will not live by the law, you'll die by the law!" and fire shoots out of his staff. I'm like, "Whoa! I don't know if that happened in the Bible, per se, but it's super serious." All right. We're expecting all this covenant-type stuff. What happens when we get to David? We get something similar. The Lord is speaking for a long time by himself. This is the longest speech of God since Sinai, since Moses.

Not only that. There's official covenant-type, agreement-type language. It's similar, but it's very different. How is it different? At this stage in the game, what the Lord is doing with David... There are not two sides. It is the Lord and he himself and what he's going to do. There are 17 verses. The first two start with... David is like, "You know what? I think I'll build a house for the Lord. I think I'll build a temple," and the Lord is like, "No, no. Put that on the shelf, and let me tell you what I'm going to do for *you*."

Seventeen verses of a one-sided covenant where the Lord again and again and again says, "This is the promise I've made. This is how I'm going to keep it, and this is how I'm going to bless you." It's what we call in church *grace*. The Lord is not looking for what we do for him; he's telling us what he has done for us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't do well with this one-sided covenant thing. Think about the last time you went to lunch with a friend or your in-laws or a pastor. You have to arm wrestle over the bill. Right? "No! I've got it."

"No! I've got it."

"No! I've got it."

Why do you not want them to have the bill? Because then you're in their debt. It's like, "I don't want my father-in-law to pick up the bill. I'm my own man. I'm going to pay for it," or whatever else. You're calculating in your mind, "Well, then I have to schedule another lunch, and then I have to pick up the check."

We don't do well when somebody extends grace to us. That's exactly what the Lord is doing. He's telling us how he is going to keep his promises. I think that's a good definition for *covenant*. Do you want to know what the biblical view of covenant is? It's that God keeps his promises.

What we're going to do with the time we have is we're going to look at two specific promises we see in this passage. They're going to be specific, but they're going to step back and show the whole scope. These promises deal with David and the Lord

Jesus who comes from him, but really, these promises reach back to the very beginning and stretch forward to the very end. We're going to see how God keeps his promises and what it means for us.

01 GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES IN THE KING

The first promise God keeps, we see here with David, is the promise of *dominion*. If *covenant* was a fun word, so is *dominion*. That sounds good. "Hey, man! What in the world does that mean?" Well, let's look back in the Bible and see if we can figure it out.

Beginning when God creates the heavens and the earth and forms man from the dust of the ground and forms woman from a rib from the side of Adam, and this, that, and the other, what does he do? He expresses his intent, his desire, and his plan for our lives. Genesis 1:26: "***Let us make man in our image... And let them have dominion...***"

What in the world does it mean to have dominion? What do we see in their lives? We see that they work and keep the garden or, as I'll put it, they sweat and see the results. Our first house my wife and I bought was in Lebanon, Tennessee. Have you ever heard of Lebanon? Probably not. Home of Cracker Barrel. You're welcome.

It was a rental property. If you've ever owned rental property or rented rental property, what happens if you don't take care of it? I'm telling you what. "Why did we get this house? It's such a cheap price." Well, I'll tell you why. I looked out my back door, and the backyard looked like Jurassic Park. It was nutso.

Things were falling all over. Massive trees were down in the back. We were poking through, picking through things, seeing what we were going to have to do, and we found a tent where somebody had been living underneath one of our downed trees on our property. Crazy!

So, for the next three or four years, nights and weekends, guess what I was doing. I was out in that yard, and I was sweating. I was doing work. I'm getting my ax and doing whatever else, like, "Baby, are you impressed?" Just getting out there, getting after it. There came a time I was able to look out over my backyard. No longer was it Jurassic Park. What did I see? I saw results. That felt good. That's it.

Maybe, for you, it's yard work or any number of things. Maybe it's a project at work or whatever else. When in your life do you put in sweat and see results? You start to feel, "Okay. I see this. This is kind of what God has made me to be." Right? That's the

promise. That's the way things should be, but our sin frustrates that. Our sin enters into the picture, and there are curses that are involved with it.

The Lord promises us dominion, but what do we get because of sin? We get disappointment. Instead of dominion, we get disappointment. Instead of sweating and seeing results, we sweat and don't see anything. That's where you feel like you're on the treadmill of life, where you burn out. Not burnout where you're bored, but burnout where you're working too hard and not seeing any results and not getting anywhere.

How do you know you're burned out? You're burned out if the most exciting things about your life are actually outside of your life. What do I mean by that? What's *in* your life? In your life are your responsibilities...your responsibilities in relationships, in work, in school, and whatever else.

If you're at a point where you are burned out *in* your life with all of those responsibilities, and the most exciting thing about your day today is outside of that... It's the wish list you make on the Internet. It's the vacation you've been spending time planning for. It's the hobby you're spending way too much time or money on. It's some sin, like you're drinking too much or something sexual or whatever else.

If the most exciting thing about your life is outside of your life, you're feeling the curse of sin. No longer dominion but disappointment. Guess what? There's good news, the good news that God keeps his promises. If he created us for that, he's going to make it happen, and he's going to make it happen through the King.

In Genesis, chapter 3, the Lord makes a promise. He says, "These are the curses sin has brought, but there will come an offspring." There will come a child, a son, who is going to crush the head of the Serpent and bring dominion back and bring his people back to the garden. You see little sprinklings of that through the Old Testament, if you read through.

We're going to see the blessing to Abraham. One of the things is that Sarah, his wife, is going to have sons, and kings of peoples will descend from them. Interesting. Kings are going to come. Next we see Rebekah's brothers. They say, "May your offspring possess the gate of their enemies." You see a little bit of possession, a little bit of ruling-type stuff in there.

Finally, we get through the judges. We're like, "Well, *that's* not it." Have you ever read the book of Judges? Terrible. The book of Judges is awful. It goes from bad to worse to terrible. Just terrible, terrible, terrible. Okay, fine. So, they're not it. Then we get to David. Maybe David is it. Do you remember last week? No. Just like Adam, he saw

what he couldn't have that was pleasing to the eye, and he desired it, so he took for himself, and he fell. It would have to be someone after David. The King is coming.

That's where you get, in this passage in 2 Samuel, the wordplay of *house*. Did you see it? David wanted to build the Lord a house. He was thinking a building, like a temple. The Lord said to David, "No, David. I'm going to build *you* a house." It's not a house like a palace. He already has one of those. It's a house like a people. But it's not just a house like a whole bunch of people, though it is. It's a house like the dynasty of the king.

Look at verse 12. ***"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you..."*** There it is. An offspring from the promise in the garden. ***"...who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."***

A fascinating question, then, is...*Is this Solomon?* Solomon is David's son. He was the king of Israel. He wrote two books of the Bible. His name means peace. He actually built a building that's called the *temple*. It can't be Solomon. Why? Because he sins like his dad. Again, just like Adam, just like David, he sees what he can't have, and he desires it, so he takes it for himself, and then the kingdom is torn apart.

It can't be those who come after David either. Why? Well, the Lord says in verse 14. He's talking about these earthly kings. They will commit iniquity. That means they're going to sin. They're going to mess up. "All of the sons after you, David, are going to commit sin, and they're going to be disciplined for their sin. They're going to be disciplined with the rod of men, the stripes of the son of men."

At the end of the Old Testament, we see kings messing up, messing up, messing up. Just as Adam is kicked out of the garden, so the kings are kicked out of the Promised Land. When is the one going to come? Well, he comes in Jesus. He comes in King Jesus, our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who knew no sin yet bore our sin on his body and was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquity; the one who took the curse of the ground on himself.

I was reading through with my son the other day, and it has a picture in the Bible of Jesus with the crown of thorns. It's like, "Why?" Why did he wear thorns on his head in that crown? To show us that he is taking the curse of the ground. The Lord said to Adam, "No longer will the ground yield its produce because of sin. There will be disappointment. The ground will yield thorns." That's the curse of sin.

Jesus takes that on himself. He even wears it. He bears it in his body on the tree, but he conquers sin and death and rises again to have an eternal dominion that God had promised. Jesus himself is the one who builds the temple. Isn't that great? At the end of John, chapter 2, in the New Testament, John reminds us that when Jesus is talking about the temple, he's talking about the temple of his body.

God's presence... We're not going to a box or a building anymore; we're going to a person, Jesus. But what temple does Jesus build? He builds his church. What does Peter tell us? That you are the temple of God, as living stones being built up together in love and unity. Jesus is the King. He is the one promised long ago. He is it.

When we see it, what does it mean for our lives? It means it brings us purpose. In some ways, it means we finally align our lives how they should have been from the beginning. What do I mean by your purpose? Why are you alive? What are you living for? What shapes your day to day? What brings purpose to your life? Because that thing, pretty much, is going to be the king that sits on the throne of your life.

A lot of times we don't know who it is or what it is. But if you think through, "What shapes my day? What brings me purpose...?" Is it something outside of you? Maybe, if you're honest, it's some sort of sexual fulfillment. That really is what you're looking for, what you're desiring, what you want, and that's what's kind of dictating how you live. Maybe it's money. Yeah, you want it because it's going to give you value, and it's going to dictate your happiness.

Or maybe it's your image, that you can't get out of your own head. It's like you're living always in front of a mirror, wondering what people think about you, what they see, and *that's* dictating how you live. Or maybe it's politics. The allure to be part of some club and cause that will save America and the whole world is too big for you to ignore. Those are cruel and ruthless kings that will leave you in darkness and chaos.

Or maybe it's yourself. We see this in the most extreme by transgender activism. They say we can change objective reality because of our subjective feelings. That's an extreme version of it, but guess what: it hits every single one of us. Kind of the "follow your heart" culture.

You make the biggest decisions of your life by how you feel somewhere deep down. Who you're going to marry, what you're going to do, and even how your day to day goes is based on following your heart. That is going to leave you, again, in darkness and chaos. Some of you guys are there. Many of us *have* been there. All of us *will* be there.

There's only one King, and his name is Jesus. That's the offense of the gospel. The good news is there *is* a King, and his name is Jesus. That means whenever we... As at baptism, when they said, "Yes, whatever he says, I'll do. Wherever he calls me to go, whatever he commands me to do..." That reality, when King Jesus is on his throne, gives unique direction and purpose of your life. The challenge is... *Where have you yet to submit to King Jesus?*

That's a hard thing to figure out. Let me challenge you to figure it out in community. If you're here and you haven't joined with the life and rhythm of our church, you can come to the Weekender. Figure out what it's like to plug your family here and plug yourself here. Or if you're in a Community Group, let other people in. "Help me figure out what it means to submit in every area of my life to the King." Then and then only will you have purpose in the midst of disappointment, in the midst of burnout.

02 GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES IN HIS SON

The second big-picture promise reaches back all the way to the beginning. It's the promise of a *family*. God accomplishes that promise in the Son. If the King brings purpose, the Son brings family. We see in the garden... Luke actually reminds us of this in Luke 3, but we see in the garden that Adam, in some ways, is kind of like a son of God.

In that garden, in that reality, Adam and Eve experience rest in God's love. They experience peace in God's presence. It's like they have a real reality of belonging, like they are fully and finally home. "Home is where the heart is." That's true if they're talking about Middle Tennessee. I am a sojourner and stranger in a foreign land here in North Carolina.

I'm telling you what. When I head west on I-40 and make my way through the mountains... (If you're from the West Coast, we still call those things *mountains*. Bear with us.) I'm making my way through the mountains, and I go over the Cumberland Plateau. When things open up and I get into the great Middle Tennessee, and I see those rolling hills and the broad-leafed trees, and I can smell that fresh-cut hay, guess what, baby. I'm coming home. I feel it, and I know it.

Maybe you have some home in your life too. Maybe it's some sight or smell or some memory. Oftentimes, home for us is in the rear view, where we *have* been. "Man! If I could just get back..." Sometimes it's always out of reach. "Man, if I can just get that job or get that person or get that [whatever else]..." That sense of home. It's what we

were made for. It's what we're reaching toward, but we can never find it. Why? Because of sin.

If sin breaks the purpose and leads us to disappointment, sin breaks us being in a family and leads us to isolation. The second Adam and Eve sinned, everything changed. They hid from God. They were exiled from the garden. You know it too. I mean, the Lord is Lord by his Spirit. That means, if you want to think of it *this* way, he's everywhere.

Why is it that after you fall into the same sin pattern, the same struggle you promised yourself you'd never do again, you promised your Community Group, or whomever else, you'd never do again... Why is it whenever you screw up again and you turn off the lights you feel far from God? We know he is Lord by his Spirit. Why do we feel far? It's because that sin keeps us from home, leads us to isolation, to shame.

God is a God of covenant. It means he keeps his promises. If he created us for that reason, guess what: he's going to make it happen, and he's going to make it happen through the Son. We see that promise in Abraham. Remember Abraham? Father Abraham had many sons, but for a while, Father Abraham didn't have anybody, and that was the problem.

Look in chapter 12 of Genesis. Remember the garden, Adam and Eve? Kind of the next big pillar moment, if we're reading through the Bible, comes with Abraham. Adam and Eve lost their home. What does God promise Abraham in Genesis, chapter 12? ***"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.'"***

He's like, "Hey, what you've been wrestling with, struggling through, wandering about in... That's not where you're supposed to be. I'm about to lead you home, Abraham. I'm going to make of you a great nation, and I'll bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing." It sounds almost like what he said to David: make his name great so David would bless others.

But how? How is the Lord going to make him a blessing? Through the Son. Abraham didn't have a son until the Lord made it happen. And David... Even though he had a family at this time, how is the promise going to be realized? In 2 Samuel 7:12, "This one, this son, who will come from your very body." It's just like Abraham. "Yes, Abraham, your son, your beloved son, whom you love."

This son of David will be the one through whom the promise of Abraham, through whom the promise of family will work and will come, but the son of David is also going to be the Son of God. Do you see that in 2 Samuel 7:14? He says, ***"I will be to him a***

father, and he shall be to me a son." "No, David. It's not going to be any of your screwed-up children. It's going to be my very Son."

That's what Matthew is picking up on. Do you know how Matthew begins his gospel? The beginning of the New Testament, Matthew 1:1: ***"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ..."*** He's picking up that thread from Adam. *Genealogy*. That's the "begats" in the Bible you usually skip over in your reading plan.

What does the word mean? It's the genesis. Where have we heard that before? The beginning. This is the true beginning. This is God's creative purposes being realized, not just way back there at the garden, but here and now in this person. The genesis of Jesus Christ, the son of David. Here he is. He is the King. The King will have an eternal dominion. The son of Abraham. Here he is. He is the promised Son who will bring us back to his family.

This is the key that unlocks the whole Bible. All of the many threads of God's promises are woven together in the person of his Son. It unlocks the whole Bible. I was listening to a podcast the other day, and the host is a nominally and ethnically Jewish person.

The host was talking to a Christian and was like, "Hey, isn't that kind of what Christians say, that in the Old Testament it was about one family back then and there, but now we're all God's family? So, back then God had rules for some kids, but now he has rules for all of us, because we're all children of God?" It's like, "It's close, but no." Why? It forgets about the Son, Jesus Christ.

It's not about going from one family to a universal family. It's not even about going from one ethnic people to a church. As Paul puts in 1 Corinthians, it is about all of God's promises being yes and amen in Jesus Christ, so that all of these varied threads of what God has designed and purposed are woven together in and through his Son. Yes, even the thread or purpose of family, of belonging.

I was listening to the radio the other day, and Waylon and Willie and the boys came on. (Some people didn't know this song last service. I may have to sing it for you.) "Mammas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys." Why not? "Cause they'll never stay home and they're always alone, even with someone they love." I think more of us are cowboys than we realize. Do you know why? Because some of us can never stay home. Some of us have that restless heart.

It's funny. We can laugh when Waylon is singing it, but it isn't funny when it's the way we're living. We're always thinking about the new and the next. We can never be

where we are because we always want to be somewhere else, with someone else, doing something else. We have a restless heart. We can never stay home.

Or maybe we're always alone, even with those we love. Again, we can find nowhere safe, nowhere we can let our guard down, nowhere we can just be us like we actually belong, and it just hurts. Whenever you're sitting across the table or sitting in the same room with somebody you know you're supposed to be genuine and real with, you still feel distant. You still feel isolated. You still feel never at home and always alone. How can we be brought home? Through the Son, through Jesus Christ.

Salvation in the New Testament is pictured... Obviously, it's a spiritual reality, but it's pictured in ways we can understand. When Jesus talks about him being the vine and us as the branches, what is he saying? If we want to say salvation or all of the promises... How are they ours if we are engrafted or brought into bear with the Lord himself?

Or think about baptism. What does baptism show? Paul tells us in Romans 6. It shows that we've been united with Christ. The Spirit of the living God has so joined us with our Savior Jesus Christ, so that when Jesus was lowered into the tomb, it's almost like our way of living, our old life, was dead and buried with him, so when he is raised to a victorious and resurrection life, that's the life we are raised to now by his Spirit.

That's the promise of sonship, not just like inheritance. That's a big deal in the New Testament, though, that the firstborn son gets the inheritance, and we all get it with him. Everything that is Jesus' he shares with us. That's incredible. What does Paul hit in Romans, chapter 8? What do we have in the Son? Look at this.

Romans 8:15: ***"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear..."*** That sounds a lot like the curse of sin. Maybe you're living under that curse now, that spirit of slavery that binds you in fear. Well, guess what. When you come to Jesus, when you trust in him, when you find your life hidden in him, you are given the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Super important. Who calls God his "Abba"? Who and who alone, when he's talking to the Lord, can call him "Abba"? This is where the Sunday school answer works. *Jesus*. Remember the garden of Gethsemane? "Abba, Father." He's crying out. Those are his words and his alone.

How then can we call God our "Abba"? If we have his Spirit of sonship, if we have been so united to Christ that our very life and identity are hidden in him. If we come to the Son, we are brought into the family. Not only the family of the church. That's a big deal, though. Right? You're baptized into a body of believers.

But also the family of God, the Father, and the eternal love he has for his Son in the bond of the Spirit. That is ours when we are in Christ. So, if you are wandering and wondering if you'll ever have a place to belong, you do. You were created for it, and it has been made to happen through the Lord Jesus, through our God who keeps his promises in the Son.

God creates us for a purpose. He creates us for a reason. He creates us according to his design, and he makes it happen in our lives. When our eyes are open to it, it just floors us, doesn't it? Maybe you've been floored before. I'll tell you what. David is. Look at this. We read the first 17 verses of this chapter. Look at the next verse. We showed and read and talked through how God made these promises and made them happen and is going to do it. How does David respond in verse 18?

"Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and said, 'Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?'" "That you've done all this in my past. I can't even believe it. Yet *that*, all the past stuff, is a small thing in your eyes." Why? ***"You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come..."*** "I'm floored by not only what you've done but also what you're doing and what you will do."

Here's a tough little clause to translate: ***"...and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD!"*** People go back and forth. Is that a question or is that a statement? The question form would be like *this*, and maybe your Bible puts it this way: "Is this the way you deal with men? Is this the way you deal with people?"

Or it's a statement. "Hey, this is the way he deals with people. Yes, a one-sided grace, the covenant he makes. He creates. He makes. He keeps. Is this the way God deals with people? Yes!" Can you imagine? David feels the curtain drawn back in his life, and he sees all of the threads coming together in this Son, in this King who is to come. I pray that the Lord would bring *you* that moment of clarity here today.

So often in life, we can feel like we're on the treadmill. Again, we don't really know what we're doing. We're not really sure exactly where we're going, if anywhere at all, but there are moments, usually in the rear view, when you look back and say, "Oh, yes. Now I see that, God, you were working all of those things in that season to lead me to this point. Now I get it."

What would it look like for you to have that moment of clarity now in the present? You can see your life not as aimless, purposeless wandering or discouragement but as aligned with purpose and belonging in Jesus. What would it look like for you now to be floored by the covenant promises of God that reach all the way back to creation

and stretch all the way into the future and, yes, even bring you and your story into the picture?

I love how David responded. He just went in and sat. He had nothing left. "Lord, all I can do is just sit and be washed over with your grace and with your goodness." So, what would it be like for you to sit and to be washed over with the grace and the goodness of God? Stop twiddling your thumbs, thinking what you are going to do for God, and turn your eyes to Jesus and see what God has done for you to bring you a purpose and to bring you back into his family. Let's pray together.

Our Father, help us to see. Help us to see the curse of our sin in our lives. This aimlessness, this purposelessness, this burnout isn't just because of stuff outside of us; it's because of our hearts, that we have turned our backs on you, that we have put ourselves as king in your place. Just drill into us the realization of the curse of sin in our lives so you can tear away the veil and show us fully and finally your glory in the face of your Son.

Whatever we're looking for, whatever we're scratching for, searching for, Lord, may we come to Jesus this morning and see it all played out in him. Lord, we just want to sit and let that wash over us, what you want to do for our futures, what you want to do for our marriages, what you want to do for our families, what you want to do for our church, not because of what we've done but because of what you've done and what you're doing in your Son Jesus Christ. It's in his name we pray, amen.