

The Life of David

David's Prayer

2 Samuel 7:18-29

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David's Prayer

Scripture

Last time we examined 2 Samuel 7:1-17. David had been settled in Jerusalem for some time. His beautiful palace had been built. One day he told Nathan the prophet that he wanted to construct a permanent building to house the ark of God. Nathan encouraged him to go ahead. But later that evening God told Nathan to tell David that David was not to construct a permanent building for the ark of God. Instead of David building a house for God, God was going to build a house for David. God did not mean a physical structure. God promised to build an eternal kingdom for David. God put it this way in 2 Samuel 7:16, “And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” God’s promise is known as the Davidic covenant.

As soon as David heard what God was going to do for him, David responded in prayer. This is one of the most marvelous prayers in Scripture.

Let’s read about David’s prayer in 2 Samuel 7:18-29:

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? ¹⁹ 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! ²⁰ And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God! ²¹ Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. ²² 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. ²³ And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God

went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? ²⁴ And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O Lord, became their God. ²⁵ And now, O Lord God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. ²⁶ And your name will be magnified forever, saying, 'The Lord of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of your servant David will be established before you. ²⁷ 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. ²⁹ 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." (2 Samuel 7:18-29)

Introduction

If you are a Christian, what do you find to be the most difficult thing to do as a Christian? Is it sharing the gospel with someone you don't know? Is it sharing the gospel with someone you do know? Is it sharing your testimony of God's grace in your life with fellow believers? Is it spending time each day reading your Bible? Is it worshiping God with fellow believers on the Lord's Day?

I think that the most difficult thing to do as a Christian is prayer. I am not talking about praying before a meal. Or praying when we are in a crisis. Or praying for a loved one who is ill. Almost all of us do that. No, I am talking about spending time alone with God in focused prayer. That is difficult.

And yet, prayer is our lifeline to God. In prayer, we express to God what we think about him. In prayer, we confess to God

our manifold sins. In prayer, we give thanks to him for his abundant mercies to us. And in prayer, we petition him for those things he has put on our hearts.

The Bible gives us several models for prayer. The best-known model for prayer is what is known as “The Lord’s Prayer,” although it really is “The Disciple’s Prayer.”

Another model for prayer is the prayer that David prayed after God made a covenant with him. In gratitude to God for his amazing grace to him, David prayed to God. We can be encouraged to pray better as we examine David’s prayer.

Lesson

Second Samuel 7:18-29 shows us a model for prayer.

Let’s use the following outline:

1. Praise for God’s Plan (7:18-22)
2. Prayer for God’s People (7:23-24)
3. Petition for God’s Promise (7:25-29)

I. Praise for God’s Plan (7:18-22)

First, let us see praise for God’s plan.

David was astonished by what God had promised him. An everlasting kingdom! But notice what he did. Verse 18a says, **“Then King David went in and sat before the Lord.”** And then he prayed. David spent focused time in prayer before the Lord.

Right at the outset there is a lesson here for us. How do you respond to God’s grace in your life? Do you go the Lord in prayer? Do you take time daily to sit before the Lord and talk to him in prayer? How much time do you spend each day with the Lord?

As David sits before the Lord, notice three ways in which he gives praise for God’s plan.

A. Praise for Previous Grace (7:18)

First, there is praise for previous grace.

David prays, **“Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?”** (7:18b). David is blown away by God’s previous grace to him. David was a teenager when God promised him that he would become king over Israel. It took many years, lots of detours, much danger, but God’s grace preserved David and God had brought him thus far.

Brand-new Christians sometimes don’t see much of God’s previous grace in their lives. It is usually older, more seasoned Christians who can look back over many years and see God’s previous grace that has preserved them and brought them thus far.

B. Praise for Promised Grace (7:19)

Second, there is praise for promised grace.

David continues praying in verse 19, **“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!”** God’s preservation of David **was a small thing in the eyes of God**. But it pales in comparison to what God was going to do for David’s house **for a great while to come**, that is, for all eternity. David’s house, kingdom, and throne shall be established forever (cf. 7:16). And thus David praises God for his promised grace.

Are you a Christian? Are you justified by faith alone in Christ alone by God’s grace alone? If you are, then you are part of the eternal kingdom. And God’s promised—or future—grace is that he will bring you safely to glory. “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31b-32).

C. *Praise for Sovereign Grace (7:20-22)*

And third, there is praise for sovereign grace.

David prays in verses 20-22, **“And what more can David 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.”** God’s sovereignty and God’s greatness have brought about the promise to David regarding the eternal kingdom. It seems as if words are almost inadequate for David to express praise for God’s sovereign grace.

I mentioned last time that Louis XIV of France was the longest-reigning monarch of a sovereign state. He reigned for more than 72 years! My Old Testament professor, Walter Kaiser, tells the story how this French monarch wanted to be known as the greatest king ever. So he requested that at his funeral in the great cathedral of Notre Dame all would be darkened except for one candle on his casket displayed at the front of the sanctuary. But when the great court preacher Masillon got up to give the funeral message, he walked over to the casket and snuffed out the light. With that he commenced his message as he twice intoned the words: “Only God is great! Only God is great.”¹ David did not have to be a funeral to give praise for God’s sovereign grace. He burst out with praise and said, **“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.”**

So, first, there is praise for God’s plan.

¹ Walter C. Kaiser and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, vol. 23, The Preacher’s Commentary Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1992), 193.

II. Prayer for God's People (7:23-24)

Second, let us observe prayer for God's people.

David recognized that God's people are unique. God had chosen them out of all the other peoples on the earth.

David's prayer focuses on three aspects of God's people.

A. *Prayer for God's Redeemed People (7:23)*

First, there is a prayer for God's redeemed people.

David prays in verse 23, **“And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods?”** The key word in this verse is the word **“redeem.”** God's people have been redeemed **from Egypt** in order **to be his people**. Dale Ralph Davis states that “Biblical redemption always involves both elements: liberation and possession.”² God liberated his people from Egypt so that they would be his possession. I also like what Davis adds when he says, “We might say that Yahweh grants his people freedom but not independence; they are to belong to him.”³

That is true for God's people today too. Peter writes to Christian believers and says, “...you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19). Therefore, says Paul, “You are not your own, for you were bought

² Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 102.

³ Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*, 102.

with a price.” (1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a). Christians have been redeemed from Satan and now belong to God.

My dear Christian brother and sister, do you understand that? You used to belong to Satan. But then God redeemed you by the blood of his Son, Jesus Christ, and now you belong to God. That means that you have a new Master, and your desire is to honor and please your Master all the days of your life.

B. Prayer for God’s Preserved People (7:24a)

Second, there is a prayer for God’s preserved people.

David prays in verse 24a, **“And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever.”** The key word in this portion of the prayer is the word **“forever.”** Just as David’s kingdom will last forever, so will God’s people be preserved **forever**. “So,” says Davis, “David recognizes that Israel is as permanent as his dynasty, not because they are so durable but because Yahweh intends to keep them.”⁴

Do you remember how Jesus affirmed his preservation of those who belong to him? He said in John 10:29, “My Father, who has given them [that is, his sheep] to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

If you belong to God, then no one, not even Satan, is able to snatch you out of the Father’s hand. You are secure for all eternity.

C. Prayer for God’s Privileged People (7:24b)

And third, there is a prayer for God’s privileged people.

David continues to pray, saying in verse 24b, **“And you, O Lord, became their God.”** David is echoing covenant language. For example, God promises Israel in Exodus 6:7, “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that

⁴ Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*, 103.

I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” God redeemed his people from bondage to the Egyptians and they became his possession. Out of all the peoples in the world, Israel became God’s privileged people. He became their God and they become his people.

That is still true today. God redeems us for himself. He becomes our God and we become his people when we are united to Jesus by faith in him.

David’s prayer for God’s people recognizes that God’s people—in all ages—are redeemed, preserved, and privileged. David looks at God’s people and praises the God of his people!

John Stott tells the story when the Rev. Paul Gibson retired as Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, and a portrait of him was unveiled. In expressing his thanks, he paid a well-deserved compliment to the artist. He said that in future he believed people looking at the picture would ask not “Who is that man?” but rather “Who painted that portrait?”⁵ In the same way, David’s prayer for God’s people praises not the people but the God of his people.

So, there is first, praise for God’s plan, and second, prayer for God’s people.

III. Petition for God’s Promise (7:25-29)

And third, there is petition for God’s promise.

There are two facets in the petition for God’s promises.

A. *Petition for God’s Name to Be Magnified (7:25-27)*

First, there is a petition for God’s name to be magnified.

David prays in verses 25-27, **“And now, O Lord God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your**

⁵ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 82.

servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. And your name will be magnified forever, saying, 'The Lord of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of your servant David will be established before you. 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." David's petition is not for his own health or his own benefit. His petition is for God to glorify himself in the well-being of his believing people.

Listen to yourself when you pray. What is the focus of your prayer? Most of our prayers are for our own health or safety or well-being. It is not that our forefathers did not face these challenges themselves. They did. But the focus of their prayer was for God's name to be magnified. When Jesus taught his disciples about not being anxious about the concerns of life, he taught them how to focus their prayer when he said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Let us do the same.

B. Petition for God's Promise to Be Fulfilled (7:28-29)

And second, there is a petition for God's promise to be fulfilled.

David concludes his prayer in verses 28-29, "**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.**" David asks God to do what he said he would do. And, of course, such a prayer is always God's will.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed David's prayer in 2 Samuel 7:18-29, let us give attention to our prayers.

David's prayer is a model for our own prayers. David gave praise for God's plan, prayed for God's people, and petitioned for God's promise to be fulfilled. It is a model that can guide our praying even today.

Let me close with a few practical suggestions. I said earlier that I think that the most difficult thing to do as a Christian is to pray. Rather than feel guilty for not praying as you would like, let me offer some suggestions that may help you pray better.

First, plan to spend time each day in prayer. Set aside some time each day when you are able to be alone to pray.

Second, use a plan to guide your prayer. Make sure that your prayer includes praise, confession, thanksgiving, and petitions. A guide using the acronym of ACTS for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication is one such guide. I personally use the Lord's Prayer as a guide. The point of using a guide is to make sure that your prayers are full and don't just focus only on petitions.

Third, use a prayer list. A list enables me to keep track of things for which I pray. It also helps me know when and how God has answered my petitions. There are many different kinds of prayer lists. The simplest is just a notepad or three by five cards. There are a number of different apps that you can use to help you keep track of your prayers.

And finally, don't give up. We have an enemy, Satan, who does not want us to pray. He doesn't want us to praise God, confess our sins to him, thank him, or petition him for anything. Let me encourage you to forget about yesterday's failure and pray today.

My dear brothers and sisters, let us give attention to our prayers. God will hear us when we turn to him in prayer. Amen.

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in order to magnify God's name.*

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