

God's Dwelling Place

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This is the second week we're anticipating Christ by tracing *zera*, the Hebrew word for seed, through the scriptures. Last week we saw that Jesus is the promised seed who crushes our real Enemy and is our true and trustworthy Friend. Today we move into the time of the Kings.

Building for God

As we drop down into this story, King David has been ruling Israel for years. He's conquered most of Israel's enemies, retrieved the ark of the covenant, returned it to Israel, and achieved peace. In chapter six, there's literally dancing in the streets. All the promises of Abraham: Land, Seed, Blessing seem to be falling into place. David is described as becoming "greater and greater" (4:10). *This* is what many of us dream of—to reach a point in life when there's no more striving, no more struggle to provide, a vocation that hits your sweet spot, nobody looking over your shoulder, a nice place to live, and all our enemies put to rest. Career honed, side-hustle taking off, golden years with the kids (sleep through the night and obey most of the time). By modern standards, David is living the dream. But there's a flaw in this line of thinking. It's living for what David Brooks calls *resume virtues*. Resume virtues are the ones you list on your resume, contribute to your external success. *Eulogy virtues*, however, are those you want praised at your funeral, what you want people to say about you after you're gone: loving, humble, sacrificial, an aroma of Christ. Let's call resume virtues David I and eulogy virtues David II. David I wants to conquer, achieve, create. David II wants to serve, pray, even renounce success at times. David I wants to know *how* things work, loves to podcast, inhales knowledge, makes wise investments. David II wants to know *why* he exists, loves the Scriptures, invests in people. David I's motto: *achieve* (maybe survive in 2020). David II's motto: *faith, hope, and love*. And the thing about these two Davids, the outer majestic David I, and the inner, humble David II, is they're not fully reconcilable. You can't commit to both fully. You can't be driven by achievement *and* devoted to Christ. One will eclipse the other. Now that's not to say you can be David II and experience success. The question is what drives you? What do you invest in? Are you pointed in a David I or David II direction? What are you building your life on?

Achievement or faith, hope, love? Depending how honest you are, this could be a turning point moment for you, your family. What does David do next? Sitting in his cedar palace, enjoying some well-deserved rest, it occurs to him that while he's kicking back in a nice place, he's left God in a tent! So he gets to work on a spiritual legacy, doing something for God; he resolves to build a temple. After all, that's what all the other ANE kings did when they settled down—built a house for their god. It all checks out with God's prophet, Samuel, until he's woken up by God in the middle of the night delivering his longest recorded monologue since Moses. It starts, "Go and tell my servant David, Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in?" (4). He questions David's entire plan. What is he missing?

Building for David

God says, let me review some things with you. Since I rescued your people from slavery at the *exodus*, I've been without a house, dwelling in a mobile home, In all the places I moved, I moved with all the people of Israel (7). After the *conquest* of the promised land I appointed judges to shepherd Israel, and I did not have a house. Then there was the time of the *kings*, and I've been with you wherever you go, in a mobile dwelling (9). Here's the point, David, I don't need you to build me a house; you need me to build a house in you. Don't you see what I've been up to? Your success has blinded you. Through the highs of the *exodus* and the lows of the wilderness; mountain top of your victories, and the valley of your defeats, I have been building you. God is honing David II virtues: perseverance, character, faith. He says, Remember where you came from. You used to follow stinky wandering sheep. *I* made you a prince, the word is leader: sheep follower to kingdom leader. How did God do it? By handing him a scepter at 15? No, by taking David through the wilderness. God honed his character and strengthened his faith as he served King Saul, playing his harp to drive evil spirits from the throne he was promised (you ever wonder why you haven't gotten that job/raise/promo); wandering the desert for three years with a bounty on his head (ever feel like God's against your success?). He may be! Only after yielding to God in the school of suffering was David ready to assume the throne he'd been promised, to move from sheep follower to sheep leader. What God is trying to build in you? Are you paying attention? Or are you so David I focused you see suffering as an inconvenience to your goals? Early in career I swung from emotional high to low. One day love it next I'd want to quit. Loved my

job until, bam, things got hard. People complain, conflict erupted, thing got messy, I'm criticized. Up and down. My oscillating response to suffering didn't even out until I opened myself up to God's agenda: *to build a house in me, not me to build a house for him*. It's through suffering that we can get in touch with faith, hope, and love. Faith in him not self, hope in gospel not plans, love for people not careers or families. See *Hardship isn't an inconvenience; it's an instrument. The scalpel of Providence intent on producing faith, hope, love.* Are you so consumed with achieving, surviving, so bent by distraction, you've missed the point of providence? Slow down. Get real with a fight club. Live for what really matters. Get serious about living a David II life: the cardinal virtues. Isn't that what you want to be known for anyway? *But* before you refocus, start that Bible reading plan, reboot that FC, make church a priority, know this: God doesn't just want to build you; he wants to live with you. It's why he reviewed history with David: I dwelled *with you* in the wilderness. Moved *with all the people*. I went *with you* wherever you went. Boil it down to a single word God is about *dwelling*. Six times it's repeated. Yashuv. It means to sit and remain, to live with, to inhabit. God doesn't just want to develop you; he wants to inhabit you. To inhabit something you have to get on the inside. Over the past few weeks we've been renovating the externals of a house. Flooring, light fixtures. But it didn't really become a home until I got lost playing Bananagram at the kitchen table with the fam, deep conversations w my wife, hosted others for dinner to love them. Home is *people*. Not living next to them but dwelling with them That's what God is doing to David: My people are my home. I've come to dwell in them. *You* are my temple. Jesus says *If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him* (Jn 14:23). Before jumping to manage a spiritual legacy, *pause*. Soak in God's presence. He wants to *inhabit you*. Confess your sins and let God stretch out his forgiveness and love, expand his presence inside. Then make people a priority! Invest in relationships. The church is God's zip code, his home, *his favorite spot!* Dwell with them.

Building for the World

Next God says *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 (12). He says, I'm not just building a house in David; I'm building a house for the world. A kingdom that will be established *forever*. I will drive out all evil, usher in never-ending peace, include people from every nation to live in harmony, for the glory of my name. How? Through a seed, an offspring, in the line of David. And about a thousand years later, a child is born in the city of David, grows up to drive out evil spirits like David, and builds a better temple than David or even Solomon. A forever temple, that requires a forever king. Jesus is that king, that seed, the better David. And he builds his temple not with an iron fist but a sacrificial life. He says, *Destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in three days* (Jn 2:19). Through the destruction of his own body he lays the foundation for the house of nations. A kingdom for the whole world. To bring his saving, satisfying presence into our hearts. The better David hung on a cross for you and me. And three days later raised to build the forever temple of God—the Church! The word became flesh and dwelt among us. Don't settle for David I or even David II. Keep your eyes, your character, your mission, your worship focused on the better David. Invite your neighbors in. Invest in people because Jesus is building a house for the world.