

4th Sunday in Advent

Dec 24th, 2017

Pastor Matthew Ude

Men Build with Sin, The Lord Builds Forever

2 Samuel 7:1-16 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, ² that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains." ³ Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you." ⁴ But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, ⁵ "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in?" ⁶ "For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. ⁷ "Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' " ⁸ "Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. ⁹ "And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. ¹⁰ "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, ¹¹ "since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house . . . ¹⁶ "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' ' "

Your son comes out to help you. Maybe your are working on your car or fixing a tractor or pruning fruit trees. Whatever, your son comes out to help. In theory that's good, a good father son moment. If mom happens to be there with the camera it's a good picture for the scrapbook. In reality though, it's often not so much fun. Your son doesn't know what he is doing. Its way more effort on your part to teach him how to change the oil than to just do it yourself.

Then of course your son thinks he knows what he is doing, and wants to do it himself. But you keep telling him no I'll do it next week because you know he'll just screw it up.

In our text this morning, David doesn't really do anything wrong. Notice he asks Nathan the prophet. He wants to build a house for the Lord. He doesn't just go out and do it, first he inquires from Nathan. This is good and proper. This is the way in which the Lord had provided to David to make His Word known.

If anything it's Nathan that messes up here, he jumps the gun a bit. "Yes go and do it." The Lord has to correct him and send him back to David with a new message, "No."

The Lord's response does sound a little bit like a rebuke, but not because David did anything wrong, but because the Lord is trying to get a message across here which just doesn't take through our thick skulls. A lesson he has repeated many times, but which we keep forgetting.

You can't do anything for me, I will do everything for you

The Lord reminds David, "I made you king when you were just a shepherd, I killed all your enemies before you, I made your name known throughout the world, I did all of this."

It's as though I were to go to the architect who built my house and say to him, since you built me a house now I will build one for you. He would of course laugh at me. He is the one who knows how to build houses not me.

So the Lord says to David and to us today, why do you keep trying to do things for me. I'm the one who is able to do things for you. Not the other way around.

It's a message that the Lord keeps repeating again and again and again and yet we just don't get it. We keep falling back into that sinful thinking, if I do something for God He will be happy with me, if I don't He will be upset.

Just the other day, I was reading an article from a pastor who kept going on and on about how the purpose of the worship service is what we do for God. NO, He comes to us in His word. He gives the forgiveness of sins. He listens and answers our prayers. He gives the blessing through the benediction. It's all Him doing for us.

There are many different types of millennialism. Almost every Baptist church will tell you something slightly different about the rapture and the millennium. But one that was extremely popular in the early 20th century, is this idea that the earthly kingdom of God will come when we are worthy of it. If we establish peace on earth, if we build a Christian kingdom, then Christ will return.

This is not very different from the idea the Jews had about the first coming of Christ, if we try hard enough and create a righteous kingdom the Messiah will come.

What happens? The same thing that happens to everything that man builds, it comes crashing down, the dream died. Sometimes it happens slowly, sometimes quickly. In this case very quickly. WW1 and then WW2 killed the dream. But now the dream is back. Through education, through war, through diplomacy, through laws, everyone has their favorite path, everyone insists this is the way to accomplish it, this is what will save humanity. When one path fails, we assume we did the wrong thing; we have to try another path. But the problem isn't the path, the problem isn't the means, the problem isn't republicans

versus democrats, it isn't religion versus science, it isn't democracy versus communism versus monarchy.

The problem is that every path, every method, every law is corrupted from the very beginning by our sin. You cannot ever build anything lasting if you begin with corrupted material.

Would you build a house for me? You can't even build a house for yourself.

Hopefully none of us are foolish enough to put our hope or trust in politics or the government. Laws won't stop sexual harassment and they won't stop racism. Checks and balances won't stop leaders from abusing their authority. Banks and corporations will in their greed again cause financial collapse.

But there are other ways in which attempt to build something without God. When we think that our knowledge and understanding will create a comfortable life. When we think that we can make a good family that we don't really need to make prayer and devotion a daily part of our family life.

There is no path, no method, no choice that will lead to the outcome we desire, because it is we who are the problem.

The only hope is that little child which we are now waiting for and looking forward to.

The Son of David, through him that Lord will build a kingdom that is not corrupted, which will not fail, which will be righteous and holy, which will last forever.

This is it, this is the only hope. God doesn't build alternatives. Man builds alternatives because he knows his plans will fail, they always do. But God has built one kingdom which will last forever. He doesn't need a backup plan and he hasn't made one.

This is our hope, its either this Christ child, or we can choose the kingdoms that men build.

As a said, as we look forward to His coming it is important to remember why we are looking forward to his coming, because this is the Son of David through Whom our God will build an everlasting kingdom.

Amen