

Forever Royals  
2 Samuel 7:1-17  
Luke 1:30-33

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
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### 2 Samuel 7:1-17

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; 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: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders 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 to 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 live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers 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 ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth 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 for ever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever. In accordance with all these words and with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

### Luke 1:30-33

The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor

David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

Our Old Testament story this morning is part of the foundation of both Judaism and Christianity. It features God correcting God's own prophet and God making David a promise that is the greatest thing a king could ever be promised. More importantly, God sets David and Nathan straight about how this relationship works.

King David has put together his kingdom, and moved his capital to Jerusalem, the great city that he conquered. He points out to his court prophet that he's living in a luxurious house built of expensive wood imported from Lebanon, but the ark of God is still in a tent. David thinks that's not right. So, Nathan tells him that the Lord is with him, and he should do what he has in mind, build a fancy house for God.

That night God comes to Nathan and tells him otherwise. God points out that God never asked for a fancy house. God lists all that God has done for David, taking him from looking after the sheep to ruling over God's people. God has walked with David all his life. God helped David kill Goliath. God helped David deal with King Saul. God helped David conquer and unify the land.

Now God tells David, through God's prophet Nathan, that God will take care of David and his family. God will make him a house, meaning not a

building, but a dynasty. David's son will build a physical house for God, and his kingdom will last forever. David's family will be kings forever.

God takes what David has in mind and reverses it. What is important is not David's grand actions, David's great gift to God. What is important is God's great gift to David.

This is the core of what the Reformation was about, when the Reformation was at its best. It was about the relationship between God and human beings.

We do not do grand things for God like building God beautiful buildings in order to make God love us. People who do that, and there are people who do that even today, have a dysfunctional relationship with God, and a fundamental misunderstanding of how God works.

We human beings can't earn God's love.

God already does love us.

God loves us before we know it.

God loves us before we are even capable of loving God back – that's the point of baptizing babies, who haven't had a chance to do extravagant things or even to answer questions. As we say at HM3, "God loves you, and there's nothing you can do about it."

We don't do good things in order to pay God back for all the incredibly good things that God has done for us. We can never do enough to be even with God – we're not powerful enough to do that.

We should do good in the world, though.

Every single one of us has received love and grace far beyond what we deserve, or even understand. Unfortunately, we get used to that. God has loved us all our lives, and we get to where we take God's love for granted. Anyone who's ever been in any kind of a relationship that lasted knows just how bad it is to take it, and the other, for granted.

We should do good in this world, not to try to gain favor with God, but because we're grateful to God. We know that we have been loved, so we can be loving to others. We know that God has shown us grace and forgiven us, so we can show grace to others and forgive them.

That is how we show God that we are grateful – not just by saying over and over again how great God is, or how blessed we are. Worshipping God is nice, but God told God's people to take away the offerings if we're not going to let it affect life outside Sunday morning. "But[,rather,] let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

My siblings, we have been blessed by God.

God loves us. We can't change that. But what we can do is show God how much we love God, by loving and being gracious to all of God's children whom we meet. By trying to make sure that we help, and not harm, everyone.

May we do that.

And, when we mess up, which we will, may we try again.

And again.

May we love other people as widely and as long as God loves us.

Amen.