

Epic Tales – 2. David and Goliath

1 Samuel 17:19-27

June 11, 2023

Pastor Bethany Nelson

Good morning beloveds, today we are on our second week of exploring EPIC TALES from scripture. Last week, we heard the story of Daniel and the Lion's Den. Today, we'll gather up our slingshots and learn about David and Goliath. These stories are familiar to many of us who grew up in church, some of you will remember songs that helped you learn these stories or have other memories. But few of us have studied these stories as adults. Today, we are setting out to change that!

To start, let's learn a bit about our young one, David. Other than Jesus, the Bible says more about the life of David than any other biblical character. His story reminds us of how complicated our lives are – David exemplifies the best and worst of us, and reminds us that all of humanity are both “sinner and saint”... That is, we all are both God's good and beloved child, and none of us are perfect.

But despite his many imperfections, David is known for his mighty acts as King of Israel. He is also known to be one of the most influential writers in scripture –with much of our book of Psalms attributed to him. Though his story is told mostly in the books of 1 & 2 Samuel, his name and his legacy reach into the pages of many other books.

His story begins at a time in Israel's history where they are being led by Kings. The people were tired of being led by judges and prophets and has asked God for a King to lead them. King Saul was there first, and through various events, it was time for the next King to be anointed. God sent the prophet Samuel to the home of Jesse in Bethlehem, assuring him that God's next chosen King was among his family. Samuel arrives and meets the sons of Jesse. Son after son are presented to Samuel. Their gifts and talents, their strong stature and worthiness are paraded in front of Samuel. They are assembled as a team of great competitors and leaders, standing proud and waiting for their name to be called as the one whom God has called. But none of these sons are the one that God has chosen. Son after son is presented, and God is quiet. Maybe crowd begins to murmur, if God is not choosing the best of the best among us – who will God call? Samuel tells Jesse, “God has no regard for appearance or stature. God doesn't look at things like humans do. Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the Lord sees into the heart.” (v7)

God reminds us that the things that we care about when choosing a leader, God has another perspective. While we look at resumes, or strength, at education, or one's known skills as a speaker or soldier. God looks past all of these attributes and looks to our hearts. At this, when none of his other sons have been chosen, Jesse tells them about David, his youngest who is out in the fields tending sheep. He is the small one, the youngest. Not a soldier, but a musician and a shepherd. He is not the one that anyone would expect God to choose. So, Jesse brought David in. “he was reddish brown, had beautiful eyes and was good looking. And the Lord said, ‘That's the one. Go anoint him.’” (v12) And from that moment forward, David – the youngest, the one easily overlooked, the one no one had considered – was chosen and anointed by God to be the next King of Israel. If the people had voted, David wouldn't have stood a chance. He was the wrong candidate, not even invited to be considered. No one saw this coming. Except God. Because God knew David's heart. And through his selection, God invites us to look for leaders among us in a new way. What is the heart of the one who leads you? What is their motivation, their longing, their hopes? God reminds us that “success” as the world defines is not the same rubric which God uses.

This reminds us of the first lesson in David's story...God sees possibilities, even when others cannot. This is a lesson echoed throughout scripture, and for good reason – because it is a lesson we need constant reminders of for our own living. How many of us have excluded ourselves from considering a call from God, because we don't feel “enough”? You might feel a tingle of God's Spirit in your heart, nudging you towards something – but you pause. You pause because: you think, “God can't pick me. I'm too old, or too young. I'm not educated enough, or I don't have the right skills. I'm not good with people, and I'll quickly be rejected, maybe even laughed at.” But God sees possibilities, even when others cannot. Even when we cannot see them ourselves. God sees the heart. God *knows* your heart, and your possibilities to share God's love with neighbors around the world. God *will* use you, anoint and call you, to serve in a way that might be challenging or scary, in a way that might seem impossible. But through you – in your words, your actions, your love – God sees possibility

and will make a way. Throughout scripture we've heard this again and again. We saw it in Moses, who was a man on the run, a man who couldn't speak well, who was called to proclaim and lead God's people out of slavery. We saw it in Mary, a young woman not yet ready for motherhood, in a position where culturally she would not be accepted – she was too young, too poor, and not from the “right” place, and yet she was invited and called by God to be the Mother of God's own son.

And maybe you have your own story to tell, too. A time where you felt like the impossible choice, but still God called you. Here at Messiah Church, we are proud of two of our own young people who felt God calling them to care for those who experience food insecurity. While collecting funds and donating food is a common practice for many churches, it is unusual that we look to the youngest among us to lead the way. But Ashley & Emily (8 and 11 years old) have discovered the ways God sees possibilities in them. If you've been around Messiah for a while, you've probably heard of their Cocoa café, and know part of their story. Maybe you've even had a cup of their cocoa. But I tell you their story again today, because of this: a few months ago, when Bishop Lanette was preaching at Messiah, she heard about Cocoa Café. She learned their story and was so moved by the witness of Emily & Ashley, that she said: others have to hear this story too! Because God sees possibilities, even when others cannot. And our Bishop knew by telling the story of Cocoa Café, others might be inspired to notice the ways God is calling them too. And so their story was told at the gathering of our Annual Conference – a time where all 330 United Methodist churches around Minnesota came together with clergy and lay representative to celebrate, discern, and commit to God's continued work among us. Lifted up among the legislation we passed, the ordinations and retirements we marked, this story of God working through Cocoa Café was told. I want to show you the video that was played that day, and I know you'll feel as proud and hope-filled about our church as Pastor Tami and I. Take a look: <https://vimeo.com/829964973?share=copy> Emily and Ashley – we are proud of the ways you are the hands and feet of Jesus. And I am grateful that God has seen possibility in YOU. Because you have not only inspired others to address food insecurity needs, but you've given others courage to listen to the ways God calls. As Isaiah said, “*the child will lead them*”.

God sees our hearts and possibility within us. Do you believe this church? Can you see others around you – the children among us, the one who has a bad reputation, or the one who doesn't think or believe anything like you – can you see their heart? Can you see the possibility within them, just as God sees? And can you look in the mirror and see yourself in this same way? God sees possibilities, even when others cannot. This lesson from David continues, because now we move along to the next chapter in David's life. Here, we pick up our primary story for today. Setting the scene: the biggest enemies of Israel have made their way and are trying to occupy land near Bethlehem, splitting the Kingdom of Israel in two. Israel brings their army to confront the Philistines. Each army is using the land around them as protection, and neither dare to leave their protection in the mountain and head to open ground in the valley. So here, for weeks – the two armies sit there, deadlocked. Until finally, the Philistines send their mightiest warrior down to the valley.

This was a traditional practice in ancient warfare, which settled disputes without incurring a major battle. For 40 days Goliath took his stand, and none of the Israelites dared to fight him. And who can blame them? It seemed impossible to win, so entering the valley was a death wish. Enter: David. He is not a soldier like the rest of his brothers but has been tending the sheep. Now, he has come to deliver bread and cheese to the camp. He asks about the scene at hand, and one of his older brothers mocks him, saying essentially “what are you doing here? You've come just to watch a fight. But you don't belong.” *These are words any of us with siblings might readily understand, right?* In case we need the reminders that siblings have gotten after each other forever, David replies, “What have I done? It was just a question!” But now, surprising everyone, David turns to King Saul and says, “I will go out and fight him!” Saul and others dismiss him. You're just a boy! And even though we *know* that David has been anointed by God as the next King, he is not there yet. And no body, even King Saul, seems to know this yet. Instead, he is only a young shepherd boy. One who belongs nowhere near a battlefield, especially against a giant. But David is adamant. He goes on to explain, that even though he is not a soldier, he knows how to protect his sheep against predators. David saw possibility, he had learned to see as God sees things. And didn't see himself as an underdog but saw himself as one called by God. David is ready to take his shot, literally. Agreeing, or acquiescing, the people try then to fit him with armor for battle, but David rejects that too. Instead, he reaches down and picks up 5 stones and puts them in his shepherd's bag, walking down to meet Goliath. The tension in the scene builds. Goliath is taunting David too. But as the youngest of eight, David is no stranger to taunting – and they fail to intimidate. Picture it: Goliath, a nine-foot tall warrior dressed in armor weighing more than David, facing off against young David, wearing clothing to protect himself

in a field, carrying his slingshot and a walking stick. David takes a stone, puts it into his sling, rolls it around and let's it fly. *At this point, some of you might be remembering a song you learned about David here, too. "And round and round, and round and round, and round and round it goes. One little rock went into the sling, and the giant went tumbling down!"* So it does. The single rock hits Goliath right between the eyes. He falls down, dead or unconscious. David takes Goliath's own sword, beheading him. The battle is won. Here is our second Lesson in David's story: God doesn't call the equipped, God equips the called.

Now, let's dive a little deeper into this story. Let me tell you something you probably didn't learn as a child: We're taught that David had just a few stones and a slingshot. And we imagine a simply constructed sling made out of tree branches, something that kids make while playing outside. But in ancient warfare, there were three kinds of warriors: (1) There's cavalry, men on horseback and chariots. (2) Then heavy Infantry – foot soldiers with swords and shields. (3) And finally, Artillery, those who are archers – or, as relevant here: slingers. Now, Goliath was heavy infantry, and was prepared for hand-to-hand combat. He expected to be met with someone of the same. But David is not going to fight him this way. He spends his days using a sling to protect his sheep against lions and wolves. This is his strength. The sling that David and others would carry had a leather pouch with two cords connected, and after placing a rock inside, they would whirl it around and let it go. This is not a child's toy. It is a devastating weapon. When David rolls it around, the rock is really fast – as much as 78 miles per hour. Not only that – but the power this rock is about the size of a tennis ball, and as it gains speed it becomes deadly. It's the handgun of the ancient world. David and his slingshot were ready. He was equipped and skilled to protect his flock with this sling. And now, he would protect his people. God looks at our heart. God sees possibility. God equips us when we are called. We don't go out, onto the battle field, or into the world, alone. God will give you the needed tools, skills, and support to rise to the task set before you. David had not prepared for battling Giants, but God knew he was ready.

This "adjacent skill" was one that God had already equipped David with. David was likely taught by those same older brothers who teased him. Or by his Dad or another shepherd. People older than David who took time to invest in him – building relationships, investing time, and equipping him with experiences and skills that would impact his whole life. None of the people who supported David would have imagined he would be defeating Giants or becoming King. But their actions – their *seeing possibilities* in him, their investing love and care, made an impact. Who are the people that invested in you? Who are the mentors, siblings, family, that helped equip you for the adventures God has guided you on? Who are the people around you now, that invest and equip you today?

Let me tell you a story: Our Wednesday evenings at Messiah have ended for summer break, but during the school year it is busy around here! Our choir is singing, KidStreet is learning and playing, several adult faith groups are meeting and building relationships. And, our youth group, gathers too – some weeks over 20 middle schoolers come to church, to eat pizza or subs, learn about Jesus, and build a safe space to be a teenager. Most weeks, they watch the same video series that we saw this morning, too – using fun and creative ways to learn about Jesus. Guiding our youth, is Sami Tierney – our Director of Youth ministry, and several faithful volunteers. Now, Sami will tell you that middle schoolers are some of her favorite people on the planet. But for a lot of us, it's a tricky age. It's a tricky age for you *in* middle school too, isn't it? You're not old enough to drive or have a job. But you're old enough to want independence and do your own thing. You're incredibly bright and capable, yet for some reason – a lot of us adults don't realize that. Maybe you, kids and youth here today, can identify with David's story pretty well, right? Well, one of our leaders in middle school is Megan McNabb. Megan is a lifelong United Methodist, and she and her family have been part of Messiah for several years. Her spouse plays in our worship band, her young kids fill our sanctuary & KidStreet with joy. We also happen to have gone to college together. I asked Megan this week, why she volunteers with Middle Schoolers. She told me this, "When we were new members, I wanted a way to get involved and meet people. So when Sami asked, it was an easy "yes". But part of the reason it was so easy, was because my own youth group experience was an important part of my teenage years. My home church was small but we had a few adults really invested in us. We did a lot of fundraising and mission trips – and those trips shaped who I am today. They led me to my major in college and career choices. If youth group could be that impactful for me, I know I wanted to create a space for that possibility for these kids, too." "I've been so impressed with our middle schoolers... They are discovering themselves and God and figuring out some really big questions about life. I'm honored to a small piece of that journey and want them to know there are adults who care about them. Megan's witness inspires me – because she can show us the full picture of how God is often at work in our life.

God saw possibility in Megan as a teen herself. Through the loving adults in her life, her faith deepened, and her whole life was impacted. Now, she repeats this cycle with a new generation. God has equipped Megan in calling her to serve our middle schoolers. It is because of her, and others like her, that our next generation will grow up knowing that they are seen, valued, and loved. God sees possibilities, even when others cannot. God doesn't call the equipped, God equips the called.

David was chosen, against all odds, to be the next king of Israel. He volunteered, against all opinion, to battle Goliath. David was not a perfect person. These two elements of his story are really great, but he has layers to his life – like all of us – and times when he does not follow God well. There are times when he causes harm, disobeys God, and is not the hero of the day. I say this, because if you're starting to think that it is impossible for God to look at you as David. That it's impossible that you serve like Emily, or Ashley, or Megan. That maybe you're thinking you're still not the right person, or you've done too many things that are "wrong", or whatever that incessant voice in your head says. I'm here to tell you: David wasn't perfect either. None of us are. God doesn't use perfect people in perfect situations to show God's love. God chose David, seeing possibility even when others cannot. And God sees possibility in you. In me. In the children and youth of our church – not someday in the future when you "grow up"... but right now. God sees you and loves you. The gifts that God will give you, the places and people God will invite you to serve will not look the same as the person next to you. Neither will the giants you face in life. But to us all, God sees possibility and invites us into opportunities to make an impact in our lives and our world.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul says it this way, and I'm reading from the Message translation: "God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people!" - 2 Corinthians 12:4-10

Each of us have a unique gift and way to change the world, even in one person. David's story encourages us to see it, even when others cannot. Even when others discourage us. God sees you, sees possibility within you, and equips you to follow, to love, and to change the world. How is God calling you today? I wonder this week, what you might learn from God, if you make extra time to listen. Maybe you can find a rock outside today, hold it in your palm, and with its weight resting in your hand consider the people and places God is inviting you to love and serve. When doubts or worries creep in, grip tightly that rock and remember: God sees possibility in you. God equips you. And God loves you.

Let us pray: Gracious God, we thank you for calling and equipping us to follow you. Thank you for seeing possibility in us, and for never giving up on us. Continue to raise up people, young and old, each unexpected and unique in their own way, to trust in you, to love your people, and to change the world. Amen.

Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of June 11, 2023

Weekly Prayer

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. -- Prayer of Good Courage

Monday June 12

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:4-13

Samuel did what the LORD instructed. When he came to Bethlehem, the city elders came to meet him. They were shaking with fear. "Do you come in peace?" they asked. "Yes," Samuel answered. "I've come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. Now make yourselves holy, then come with me to the sacrifice." Samuel made Jesse and his sons holy and invited them to the sacrifice as well. When they arrived, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, That must be the LORD's anointed right in front. But the LORD said to Samuel, "Have no regard for his appearance or stature, because I haven't selected him. God doesn't look at things like humans do. Humans

see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart.” Next Jesse called for Abinadab, who presented himself to Samuel, but he said, “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either.” So Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, “No, the LORD hasn’t chosen this one.” Jesse presented seven of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD hasn’t picked any of these.” Then Samuel asked Jesse, “Is that all of your boys?” “There is still the youngest one,” Jesse answered, “but he’s out keeping the sheep.” “Send for him,” Samuel told Jesse, “because we can’t proceed until he gets here.” So Jesse sent and brought him in. He was reddish brown, had beautiful eyes, and was good-looking. The LORD said, “That’s the one. Go anoint him.” So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him right there in front of his brothers. The LORD’s spirit came over David from that point forward.

Then Samuel left and went to Ramah.

Observation

King David’s name appears over 1000 times in the Bible. Before his famous battle against Goliath, David is anointed by God to be a leader in Israel. God had instructed the prophet Samuel to seek out the one whom God would raise up as a leader. God told Samuel, “Have no regard for his appearance or stature, because I haven’t selected him. God doesn’t look at things like humans do. Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart.” (v7)

Application

Our temptation is to look at our appearances, resumes, or other ‘outward’ evidence of our success or worth. Yet God looks at our hearts. What is the story or song of your heart? Does it beat with bravery given by the Holy Spirit? Does it long for justice and peace in our world? How is God inspiring you to grow and serve?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach me what you taught Samuel—to value integrity and character inside me more than an impressive appearance on the outside. Let what you see in me be pleasing to you. Amen.

Tuesday June 13

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:34-37, 45-51

“Your servant has kept his father’s sheep,” David replied to Saul, “and if ever a lion or a bear came and carried off one of the flock, I would go after it, strike it, and rescue the animal from its mouth. If it turned on me, I would grab it at its jaw, strike it, and kill it. Your servant has fought both lions and bears. This uncircumcised Philistine will be just like one of them because he has insulted the army of the living God. “The LORD,” David added, “who rescued me from the power of both lions and bears, will rescue me from the power of this Philistine.” “Go!” Saul replied to David. “And may the LORD be with you!”

But David told the Philistine, “You are coming against me with sword, spear, and scimitar, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of heavenly forces, the God of Israel’s army, the one you’ve insulted. Today the LORD will hand you over to me. I will strike you down and cut off your head! Today I will feed your dead body and the dead bodies of the entire Philistine camp to the wild birds and the wild animals. Then the whole world will know that there is a God on Israel’s side. And all those gathered here will know that the LORD doesn’t save by means of sword and spear. The LORD owns this war, and he will hand all of you over to us.” The Philistine got up and moved closer to attack David, and David ran quickly to the front line to face him. David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone. He slung it, and it hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone penetrated his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. And that’s how David triumphed over the Philistine with just a sling and a stone, striking the Philistine down and killing him—and David didn’t even have a sword! Then David ran and stood over the Philistine. He grabbed the Philistine’s sword, drew it from its sheath, and finished him off. Then David cut off the Philistine’s head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they fled.

Observation

Do you remember learning about this story as a child in Sunday School? After my boys first learned this story of David & Goliath, it was their requested dinner time read for *weeks!* Not only are stories about giants captivating, but they loved learning that a young boy (like them!) was the hero.

Application

This story gave my kids 'evidence' that they could do great things, too; and I love that they have this optimism. Admittedly, as an adult, my "realism" easily takes over. It doesn't make sense, rationally, that a child could beat a giant and experienced warrior. I certainly would rather my own kids be more cautious! But I wonder: how is God inviting me to have the optimism and courage of a child? How might I set aside my own caution or "realistic" perspectives, and trust in God to be with, and work through, me?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, whenever I face a giant problem, teach me how to keep my trust in you, not in my own strength. And work through whatever gifts you've given me to help defeat life's giants. Amen.

Wednesday June 14

Scripture: 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 14-15

In the spring, when kings go off to war, David sent Joab, along with his servants and all the Israelites, and they destroyed the Ammonites, attacking the city of Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening, David got up from his couch and was pacing back and forth on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. David sent someone and inquired about the woman. The report came back: "Isn't this Eliam's daughter Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" So David sent messengers to take her. When she came to him, he had sex with her. (Now she had been purifying herself after her monthly period.) Then she returned home. The woman conceived and sent word to David. "I'm pregnant," she said.

The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. He wrote in the letter, "Place Uriah at the front of the fiercest battle, and then pull back from him so that he will be struck down and die."

Observation

The story of David is also a reminder that even the "greats" among us have seasons of trouble marred by sin. David began to act in ways that were self-serving and caused harm to many others. This story of King David with Bathsheba tells a troubling story about the evils of ego and power. David, now King, had sent his army out without him. He sees Bathsheba bathing, and is overcome with desire. Ignoring her marriage (and any recognition of the dynamics between power and consent), they are intimate and she becomes pregnant. Then David sends her husband to the front of the battle lines, all but ensuring his death.

Application

One wrong step leads to another, and David finds himself in a whirlwind of bad decisions, that not only distance his relationship with God, but cause real harm to people around him. His actions are ones to be called out and condemned – these are not the ways that God's anointed and beloved are to act in the world. Yet, we will see that God continues to forgive and redeem David. Bringing healing to him, to Bathsheba, and to their future generations. What is your story of sin and redemption? Are there places or times where you have caused harm, and needed God's help to bring healing?

Prayer

Gracious God, when my steps begin to veer off course, guide me to return to you. Forgive me of my sins, and the harm I have caused to those I love. Work in my heart, that I can set aside my own ego, and faithfully follow you. Amen.

Thursday June 15

Scripture: Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love!

Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!

Wash me completely clean of my guilt;

purify me from my sin!

Because I know my wrongdoings,

my sin is always right in front of me.

I've sinned against you—you alone.

I've committed evil in your sight.
That's why you are justified when you render your verdict,
completely correct when you issue your judgment.
Yes, I was born in guilt, in sin,
from the moment my mother conceived me.
And yes, you want truth in the most hidden places;
you teach me wisdom in the most secret space.

Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean;
wash me and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and celebration again;
let the bones you crushed rejoice once more.
Hide your face from my sins;
wipe away all my guilty deeds!
Create a clean heart for me, God;
put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!
Please don't throw me out of your presence;
please don't take your holy spirit away from me.
Return the joy of your salvation to me
and sustain me with a willing spirit.
Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways,
and sinners will come back to you.
Deliver me from violence, God, God of my salvation,
so that my tongue can sing of your righteousness.
Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
You don't want sacrifices.
If I gave an entirely burned offering,
you wouldn't be pleased.
A broken spirit is my sacrifice, God.
You won't despise a heart, God, that is broken and crushed.
Do good things for Zion by your favor.
Rebuild Jerusalem's walls.
Then you will again want sacrifices of righteousness—
entirely burned offerings and complete offerings.
Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

Observation

Eventually, David makes his way back to God. Psalm 51 reveals to us David's prayer after he had been with Bathsheba. It is a prayer of confession – where he names his wrong doings, names the harm that he has caused, and asks for forgiveness from God.

Application

The story of our sin is never the end. God continues to redeem and forgive us. If you were to write a prayer, or song, of confession to God, what would you say? Take time to reflect on David's words in Psalm 51. Be honest with God and listen carefully to the words of God for you, too: "beloved of God, your sins have been forgiven."

Prayer

Good and loving God, when my love fails, you are steadfast. When my words and actions cause harm, you continue to reveal a path of restoration. In you, I find perfect and unfailing love. Thank you for your enduring presence. Help me to not only experience your forgiveness, but also offer it freely to others. Amen.

Friday June 16

Scripture 2 Samuel 7:8-11

So then, say this to my servant David: This is what the LORD of heavenly forces says: I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be leader over my people Israel. I've been with you wherever you've gone, and I've eliminated all your enemies before you. Now I will make your name great—like the name of the greatest people on earth. I'm going to provide a place for my people Israel, and plant them so that they may live there and no longer be disturbed. Cruel people will no longer trouble them, as they had been earlier, when I appointed leaders over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. And the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make a dynasty for you.

Observation

These words are from the prophet Nathan to David about God's promises for his life and descendants. It begins with a brief summary of David's call story: from pasture and flock to leader of Israel. Then David is reminded of God's faithful presence and closes with this promise: "the Lord will make a dynasty for you." (v11). Other translations say, "God will build you a house." But both give imagery that God is with David for generations to come.

Application

The people Israel would have seasons of great hardship, most significantly the Babylonian exile, and it would seem to them that God's promises had been broken. And yet, centuries later, a young woman named Mary would hear from an angel that her God-given son would be on "the throne of David" and called the "anointed one." God's promises to David found fulfillment in Jesus, even though the hearers of these original words would never know their conclusion. What is your legacy? In what ways will your story, your faith, be revealed in future generations?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you have promised time and again, to be with us to "the end of the age." Give me confidence to trust in your promises, even if I cannot see the ending. May my life be one that helps build a home and dynasty for generations to come. Amen.

Saturday June 17

Scripture: Psalm 23; Psalm 150

The LORD is my shepherd.

I lack nothing.

He lets me rest in grassy meadows;

he leads me to restful waters;

he keeps me alive.

He guides me in proper paths

for the sake of his good name.

Even when I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no danger because you are with me.

Your rod and your staff—

they protect me.

You set a table for me

right in front of my enemies.

You bathe my head in oil;

my cup is so full it spills over!

Yes, goodness and faithful love

will pursue me all the days of my life,

and I will live in the LORD's house

as long as I live.

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in his sanctuary!
Praise God in his fortress, the sky!
Praise God in his mighty acts!
Praise God as suits his incredible greatness!
Praise God with the blast of the ram's horn!
Praise God with lute and lyre!
Praise God with drum and dance!
Praise God with strings and pipe!
Praise God with loud cymbals!
Praise God with clashing cymbals!
Let every living thing praise the LORD!

Observation

David is perhaps most well known as a writer, a poet, a Psalmist. Let's end our week reflecting on two: Psalm 23 & 150. Psalm 23 offers a well-known image of God as our shepherd, guiding us through the hills and valleys of life. God prepares banquets and offers blessings. God is with us, now and always. Psalm 150 offers a song of celebration and thanks for all that God has given. Its imagery is that of a worship band, bringing together drums and cymbals, strings, and dance to celebrate the goodness of God.

Application

Do you have a favorite Psalm? Why? David wrote psalms of praise, of lament, of confession, of guidance, of joy. It is the hymnal of scripture, giving words to our longings, hopes, and prayers. Spend time today in prayer, or in song, to God.

Prayer

Praise God in God's sanctuary! Let every living thing praise the Lord! God of all creation, give me fresh senses to notice you today. Make my heart, my voice, my actions bring praise to you for your faithfulness and presence. Amen.